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JANUARY 1983 NUMBER 59

# THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

*GRAV ARMOR* +3

1982 GAME SURVEY

*MURPHY'S RULES* RETURNS

FEATURED REVIEWS:

*THE TRAVELLER BOOK*

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**COMPLETE GAME IN THIS ISSUE:**

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# THE SPACE GAMER

NUMBER 59 — JANUARY, 1983

Normally, I use this space to talk about all the new stuff in each issue. Readers thereupon go through the table of contents to find out about all the new stuff in each issue. Seems a little counterproductive. I'll do it next month, too, but here I wanted to talk about this issue's centerpiece.

Actually, the *real* centerpiece this time is our 1982 Game Survey, but that's temporary, since we expect each and every one of you to fill it out and mail it in. This leaves **Battlesuit,** *nee* **Iron Men.**

The name change was prompted by the name's similarity to another power-armor figure which one can find for 60¢ at your local comic-book exchange. (Actually, it's a lot closer to the Howard Pyle novel *Iron Men,* but Howard Pyle just isn't licensed as heavily as most comic book heroes.) So we changed the name. Three days before deadline. (Sigh. All those posters.)

—Aaron Allston

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Dwarfstar Games' ***Grav Armor*** is a surprising little game. It is an unpretentious design, which resists the impulse to oversell itself or make too many promises about its game system. When I first picked up the game, I was impressed with the physical quality of the components, but not overwhelmed with the design itself. It looked like a solid but not particularly innovative game, not a whole lot different from many of the armor games that have preceded it. However, I had learned to expect good things from Dwarfstar; it produces interesting as well as attractive games.

The more I played ***Grav Armor,*** the more I came to appreciate its straightforward, well-written rules. Most importantly, the game system *worked.* It seemed to capture the high-maneuver, intensive-fire kind of warfare the box cover and game notes suggested. The meshing of side A's movement with side B's fire placed a premium on the development of tactics and nicely simulated what I imagined to be a very fluid and deadly style of warfare.

It wasn't long before I had exhausted the five scenarios provided in the rules booklet and began turning my attention toward coming up with a few of my own. The game facilitated this endeavor. The inclusion of rules for orbital assaults, and counters for spacecraft, forts, and cities made my task easier since I could vary the action slightly from tank-on-tank slugfests. The counter variety insured that the orders of battle need not prove repetitious. And, of course, the geomorphic maps and the variable terrain made it easy to devise new and different fields of battle. My scenarios presented here are, if anything, very conservative, and barely tap the potential for new situations.

In the scenarios that follow, I have sought to emulate the originals in format and style. The unit formations (that is, the composition of the battalions and regiments) were drawn from the examples given in the Dwarfstar scenarios or deduced from the notes on organization. The terrain tables are variations of those used in the original scenarios.

### Scenario Notes

In all of these scenarios I have striven to set up fast-playing situations. To this end, only four maps have been used in each, the number of turns of play have been limited, and counter density has been kept relatively low. Gamers familiar with the system should be able to play any one of these in about 90 minutes.

*The Mines of Kelbaker:* In this scenario, I sought a situation in which both sides have a chance to attack and defend. The Imperial is on the offensive at the outset and must seize the objectives of the mining camps and the starport fairly quickly, before the Panumanic relief force arrives and the counterattack begins. The Marine Assault Regiment is strong enough to seize one of the objectives in an assault from orbit. The Panumanic player, for his part, has to use his screening force, the Recon battalion, to inflict what damage he can to the attackers in the initial stages of the engagement. The relief force, while probably smaller than the remaining Lerlim force, can concentrate on one of the objectives, since the Imperial player must hold both mining camps and destroy the starbase.

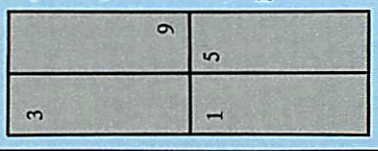
*The Kachourban Rebels:* The game's introduction states, in its brief summary of the "historical" context of ***Grav Armor,*** that "Ever-quarrelsome humans fragmented into many splinter groups . . . A league of successor states formed, and half the spiral arm was aflame with wars on a thousand worlds." This suggested to me a set of circumstances ripe for guerrilla warfare. However, to simulate unconventional combat, a few special rules were necessary. The hidden status and dummy rules were employed to allow the Kachourban Rebel units some of the advantages one associates with this sort of warfare. In playtesting, they worked rather well. In the attacks-on-cities restrictions, I made the assumption that the further away an attack is launched, the less discriminate it is. Thus, bombarding a city from several hexes away would cause considerable collateral damage to non-military targets. By moving in closer, the Lerlim forces can be a bit more selective in their attacks and less likely to further upset an already-incensed population. In terms of tactics, this gives the Rebel units a bit of a edge when defending in cities. Infantry proved best for attacking cities and flushing hidden units, hence the inclusion of a lift regiment in the Imperial order of battle.

*The Retreat of the 13th Grav:* In this scenario I was attempting to depict a "retreat under fire" situation, emphasizing the best points of the game: fluidity and firepower. The result is intended to be something of a 31st-Century Dunkirk. This was the hardest scenario to balance. The Lerlim forces had to be strong enough to fight a delaying action and still have enough units left to fulfill the victory conditions. At the same time, they couldn't be so strong as to be able to turn on the pursuing battlegroup, defeat it quickly, and still evacuate. As it stands, the Imperial player can use roughly half his units to delay the League troops, and begin evacuating the rest. He can bolster his delaying force with extra units in hopes of a quick victory, but this puts them at risk and postpones their evacuation. Alternately, he can leave a very thin screen and "bug out" as rapidly as possible. The need to make this decision is one of the best things about the scenario. For his part, the Panumanic player has to concentrate on zapping Imperial units, breaking through the defensive ring, and getting to the areas where the dropships are landing. Bagging an Imperial can clinch victory.

## THE MINES OF KELBAKER

**RAID ON MINING CAMPS:** In the later phases of the war, the Lerlim Imperial forces took to raiding Panumanic economic assets in rear areas. This scenario simulates just such an attack in which rapidly deployed elements of a Grav Armor Division attack a combination of League garrison troops, local militia, and a hastily assembled relief force.

Map Configuration




*Mining settlements of Slota and Cragin (one city marker each) placed by the Panumanic player, one each on any orange hex adjacent to any hex containing red-brown lines on map 3 (Slota) and map 5 (Cragin).*

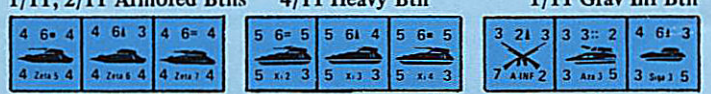
**TERRAIN KEY** Kelbaker I Class "D1" World

| Hex Color | Inf MP | Hover MP | Grav MP | Combat Value | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| yellow | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | dunes |
| blue | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | dry sea beds |
| orange | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | high desert |
| red-brown lines | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | strip mines |
| green | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | broken |
| brown | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | valleys, chasms |
| city marker | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | mining camps |

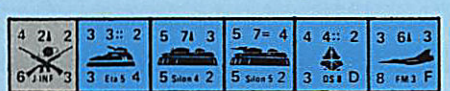
**LERLIM IMPERIAL FORCES** blue, grey unit colors
moving player on first phase

**Elements of 11th Grav Armor Division**
*arrive on first turn, anywhere on the west map edge*

**1/11, 2/11 Armored Btns** **4/11 Heavy Btn** **1/11 Grav Inf Btn**


x2 x2 x2 x1 x1 x1 x2 x2 x1

**17th Marine Assault Regiment**
*start in orbit*


x4 x1 x1 x1 x1 x1

**PANUMANIC LEAGUE FORCES** red, light green unit colors
firing player in first phase

**9th Sector Garrison Group**

**Recon Btn**
*deploy on maps 3 and 6*

x2 x1 x1 x1

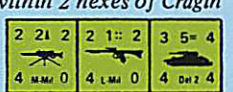
**Lift Inf Btn**
*deploy within 2 hexes of starport*

x2 x2

**Slota Def Force**
*deploy within 2 hexes of Slota*

x1 x1 x1

**Cragin Def Force**
*deploy within 2 hexes of Cragin*


x1 x1 x1

**Relief Force Miyashita**
*arrive turn 3, east edge of the map*

**1/43 Armored Btn**

x2 x2

**Provisional Battle Group**

x1 x1 x1 x1 x1 x1

**Starport** *(deploy on any orange hex on map 1)*

x1

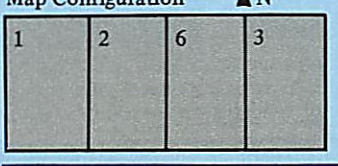
5 6 missile 4
5 6 laser 2
Passive Defense 6

**VICTORY:** The Imperial player wins if the starport is destroyed and both mining camps are in Imperial control; otherwise, the game is a Panumanic League victory. Scenario length: 8 turns.

## THE RETREAT OF THE 13TH GRAV

**EVACUATION:** The fighting for Lijart VII was particularly bitter. As the situation sorted itself out on the frozen world, Lerlim forces found themselves in a rapidly deteriorating, fluid circumstance. A general retreat was called and fleet elements were brought in. In this scenario, a beleaguered Grav division attempts withdrawal while under the guns of Panumanic pursuit forces.

Map Configuration




**Requires all MPs for infantry and hover to enter (must be the first hex of the move and will be the only hex moved into that turn); if the target is on red-brown lines, hex combat value is two, but for the detection process, value is zero.*

**TERRAIN KEY** Lijart VII Class "F" World

| Hex Color | Inf MP | Hover MP | Grav MP | Combat Value | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| yellow, blue | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | ice plains |
| orange | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | tundra |
| red-brown lines* | All | All | 3 | 0(2) | deep chasms |
| green | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | ice falls |
| brown | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | mountains |

**LERLIM IMPERIAL FORCES** blue, dark green unit colors
firing player on first phase

**Remnants of the 13th Grav Armor Division**
*set up on map 2*

**1/13, 2/13 Armored Btns** **1/13 Grav Inf Btn** **4/13 Heavy Btn**

x2 x2 x2 x2 x2 x1 x1 x1 x1

**13 Cavalry Btn** **13 Support Group**

x1 x1 x1 x1 x1 x1 x1 x1 x1

**Starfield Delta** *(deploy on any yellow hex on map 3)*

x1

5 6 missile 4
5 6 laser 2
Passive Defense 6

**Defense Detachment**

x1

**Withdrawal Force**
*enter, in orbit, on turn 2*

**Withdrawal boats**

x2

**Orbital Group**

x2

**Ortillery**

x1

**PANUMANIC LEAGUE FORCES** red unit colors
moving player first phase

**Battlegroup Mir'ti**
*Enter turn 1, on west edge of map 1*

**1/M, 2/M Grav Armor Btns** **1/M Grav Inf Btn** **1/M Assault Btn**

x4 x2 x2 x2 x2 x1

**1/M Cavalry Btn** **Support Detachment**

x1 x1 x1 x1 x1

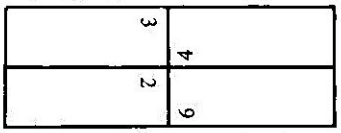
**SPECIAL RULES:** *Added capacity:* DS-3s may increase their carrying capacity from three units to four *if* they begin their movement phase in the same hex as Starfield Delta.

**VICTORY:** The Imperial player wins if he can withdraw more units of the 13th Grav Division than he loses in battle or leaves behind on the planet surface at the end of the scenario. The Titan-1 defense detachment does count, but the fort and units in the Withdrawal force do not count toward either the total of withdrawn units nor the total of destroyed units for victory determination. Scenario length: 7 turns.

## THE KACHOURBAN REBELS

**ANTI-INSURGENT SWEEP:** When the advance units of the Panumanic League made landfall on Kachourbos III, the indigenous military forces rose up in rebellion against the Imperial garrison. The Rebels were well prepared and determined, and their resistance was stiffened by Panumanic regulars. Lerlim troops took to making search and destroy sweeps to eliminate the Rebels, taking care to limit damage to civilians.

Map Configuration




*Panumanic player places 3 city counters, one per maps 2, 4, and 6. They must be placed on savannah hexes, at least three hexes from the outer map edges. At least one must be placed adjacent to a body of water.*

**TERRAIN KEY** Kachourbos III Class "T" World

| *Hex Color* | *Inf MP* | *Hover MP* | *Grav MP* | *Combat Value* | *Description* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| yellow | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | savannah |
| orange | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | hills |
| blue | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | lake |
| green | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | woods |
| brown | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | mountains |
| city marker | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | cities |

### SPECIAL RULES

1. ***Hidden Status.*** Rebel units, along with the four dummies, may be deployed hidden in hexes of combat value two or more. Hidden units may not be attacked (even by missile multiple attacks) until spotted. Units are spotted by either moving or firing *or* if at the end of the Panumanic player's movement phase, there is an undisrupted Imperial unit in an adjacent hex. Discovered dummies are removed and have no effect on play.

2. ***Attacks on Cities.*** To reflect the care taken to minimize collateral damage and thus not further incite the populace, the Imperial player is under some restrictions when attacking cities. City markers defended *only* by Kachourban Rebel units may only be attacked from adjacent units (thus ortillery may not attack such cities). Cities defended by Panumanic forces or a mix of Panumanic and Rebel do not benefit from this rule.

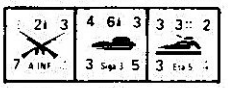
### LERLIM IMPERIAL FORCES

blue unit color
moving player on first phase

**262nd Lift Regiment**

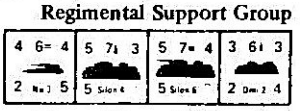
*arrive on turn one, anywhere on the west map edge*

**1/262, 2/262 Lift Btns**



x4 x2 x4

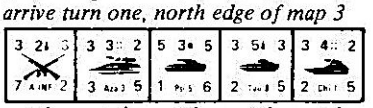
**Regimental Support Group**



x1 x1 x1 x2

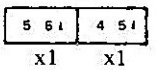
**31st Independent Cavalry Btn**

*arrive turn one, north edge of map 3*



x1 x1 x1 x1 x1

**Ortillery**



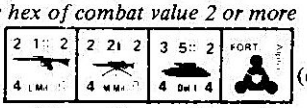
x1 x1

### PANUMANIC LEAGUE FORCES

red, light green unit colors
firing player on first phase

**Kachourban Rebels**

*deploy hidden in any hex of combat value 2 or more*



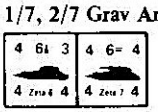
(dummies)

x2 x2 x3 x4

**7th Combined Regiment**

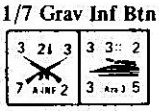
*deploy anywhere on maps 4 and 6*

**1/7, 2/7 Grav Armor Btns**



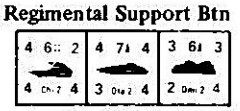
x4 x2

**1/7 Grav Inf Btn**



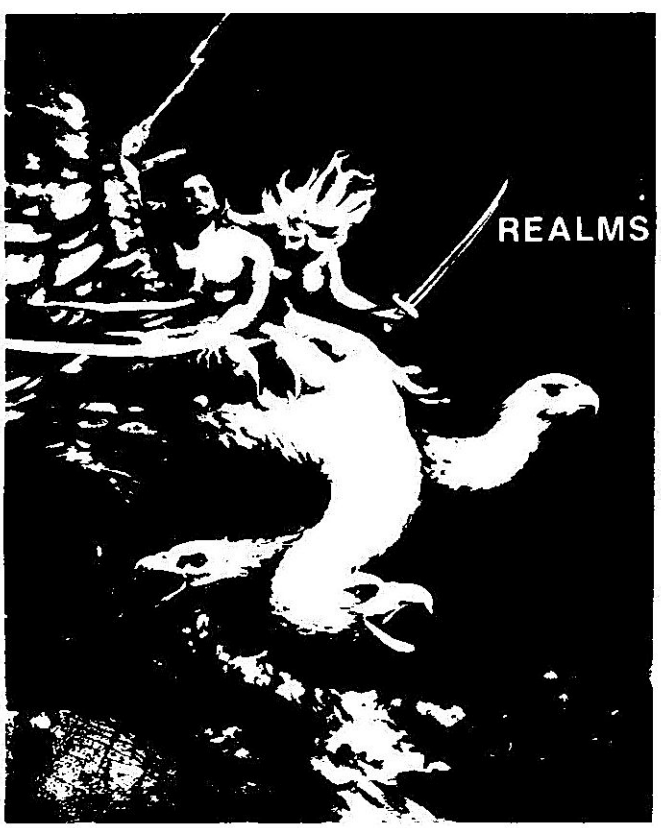
x2 x2

**Regimental Support Btn**



x1 x1 x1

**VICTORY:** The Imperial player wins if he can take control of all three cities and eliminate at least four of the seven Kachourban Rebel units. If the Imperial player takes two cities and eliminates four or more Rebels, or takes three cities and eliminates three or less Rebel units, the game is a draw. Any other result is a Panumanic victory. Scenario length: 9 turns.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# The Traveller Book

## Featured Review

## by William A. Barton

Back in "the old days," it was easy to tell a role-playing game from anything else, just by its appearance. A role-playing game was a set of little booklets in a box, or maybe a single large-sized booklet that looked like a magazine. But then came TSR's ***Advanced Dungeons & Dragons.*** It didn't come in a box and didn't look like a magazine at all – it consisted of a series of *hardback* books. It almost looked like something that could be found in a bookstore, rather than a game to be sought at the local hobby shop. Pretty soon, it *was* found in bookstores, there on the shelves alongside *real* books. Now, whether or not this affected sales (it probably did), it was impressive. And it didn't take much foresight to guess that ***AD&D*** wouldn't remain alone on those shelves for long.

The first RPG that I know of to follow TSR's lead in the hardback market was Jeff Dillow's ***High Fantasy,*** which appeared in hardback published by a real, honest-to-God book publisher (***AD&D*** was merely distributed by Random House, with TSR as the actual publisher). Along with the game came several hardback adventure books for ***High Fantasy.*** And ***HF*** joined ***AD&D*** in the bookstores. Soon, other companies jumped on the hardback wagon. SPI, in what was apparently one of its last gasps before its demise, released a hardback version of the second edition of ***DragonQuest*** (now, ironically, TSR property, too). And ***RuneQuest,*** courtesy of Reston Publishing, is available in a hardback edition. There is even a fantasy RPG which has seen its first – and so far only – incarnation in hardback book form, ***Fantasy Wargaming,*** published by Stein & Day, and also available in a book club edition from the Science Fiction Book Club.

One might note that all the hardback RPGs mentioned above are *fantasy* RPGs. Until recently, the hardback field has been monopolized by the flashing swords and searing sorceries of fantasy. But could the lancing lasers of SF have been far behind? Enter ***The Traveller Book.***

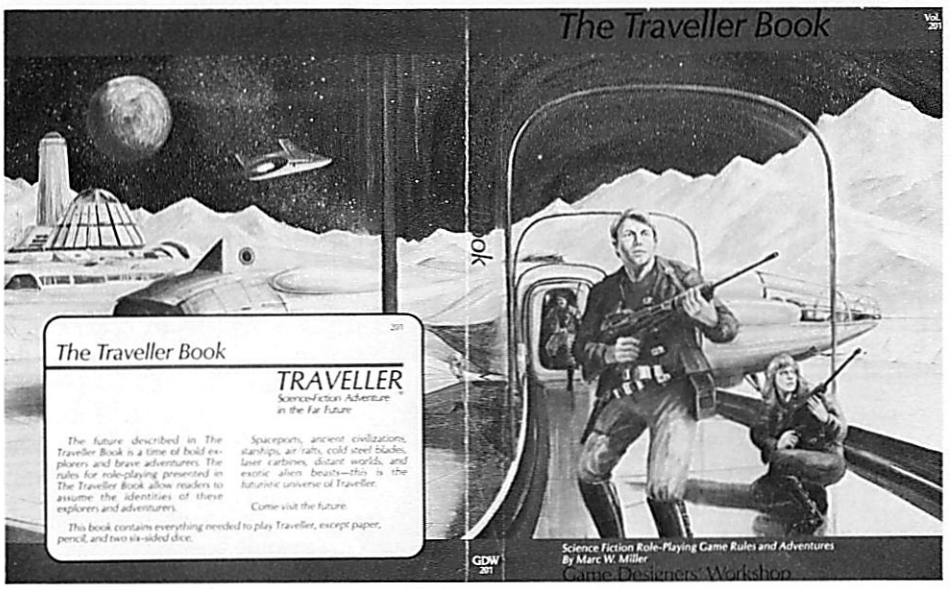
Those familiar with ***AD&D*** hardbacks may suffer a twinge of *deja vu* upon first seeing ***The Traveller Book.*** It is about the same size and thickness of one of TSR's entries, but the difference ends there. Unlike the ***AD&D*** books, with their (to my taste) rather gaudy cover illustrations printed on the covers themselves, ***The Traveller Book*** is graced with an excellently crafted cover illo by William H. Keith, Jr. on a standard dust jacket. If you don't care for the illustration or don't want to constantly be reading cover blurbs, you can remove the jacket; underneath is the familiar, tasteful ***Traveller*** red-striped, red-and-white lettering on a black background cover.

Of course, it's what's inside that really counts. And inside ***The Traveller Book*** is just about everything needed for initiating science fiction adventures in the far future. Within its covers, it contains almost the entire text of the second-edition ***Traveller*** basic rulebooks, plus the really important parts of Book 0, half of Double Adventure 1, several entries from ***76 Patrons,*** information and library data on the official ***Traveller*** universe, and more. For its $15 price, you are definitely getting your money's worth with this item.

As noted, the text pretty closely follows that of the second-edition rules. Some of the material is in a more logical order than originally found in Books 1-3, and there are several significant – plus a lot of minor – additions or revisions, further expanding the basic rules. In fact, in comparing ***The Traveller Book*** with the revised rules from ***Deluxe Traveller,*** I found only one omission of note – that of the archaic firearms (hand cannon, muskets, flintlocks, etc.) of TL 4 and below. I found a couple of other minor omissions (the roll for a patron to accept the adventurers into his employ, and the illustration of the tracked ATV) and an error in the terrain DMs in determining combat range, where the +2DM for Arctic conditions and the -4DM for Cities have inadvertently been merged into a -4DM for the Arctic, with Cities omitted altogether. But other than these – and the additions and expansions, of course – the text is faithful to the second edition.

In fact, in at least one area, the text of the second edition is followed *too* closely: The DMs for firing pulse lasers in the starship combat section are still missing, though the text declares pulse lasers to be harder to hit with, but doing more damage when they do hit. (Going by the first edition and Marc Miller's response to the question at a seminar last year, there should be a -1DM on the roll to hit when using pulse lasers. He also stated there was a +1DM on the roll for damage. This

gives a somewhat better chance to roll a critical hit, but makes a powerplant hit impossible if you're only using pulse lasers. I somewhat prefer the rule in the first edition of ***High Guard,*** which allows two damage rolls for a hit with pulse lasers, but until an "official" erratum clears this up, I imagine that will remain the referee's choice.)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GDW 201
Science Fiction Role-Playing Game Rules and Adventures
By Marc W. Miller
Game Designers' Workshop

By the way, those of you who are still using the first edition rules may get lost here and there by some of my references to the second edition. I won't go deeply into that in this review, but the second edition, and subsequently ***The Traveller Book,*** did have some significant revisions, such as the scale change on starship combat to 1 mm = 100 km and 1000-second turns, the clearer rules on recovering from wounds, the new definitions on some of the skills, two skills per term for scouts, altered weights and prices on some weapons and equipment, and the table of typical travel times, which eliminated a lot of needless calculations. If still using first-edition ***Traveller,*** you might find the new material worth the price of the new rules – or you may check out ***The Traveller Book*** instead for the further additions I'm about to cover.

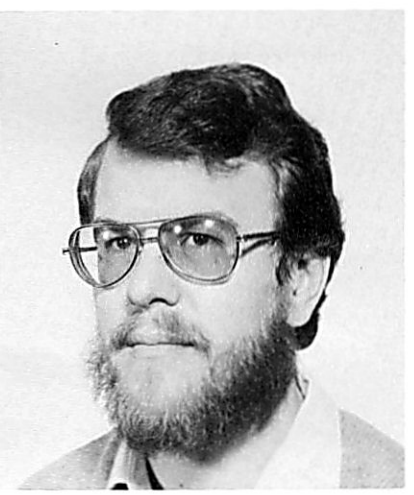
If the text of ***The Traveller Book*** is so close to that of the second-edition rules, why should someone with the second edition or the ***Deluxe*** set pick up the hardback, too? Well, that depends on how useful you may think the additions are. There are such refinements as additional DMs for use with electronics skill, expanded descriptions of vehicle skills, information on throwing polearms, fuller explanations of some of the world generation tables, guidelines on dealing with stowaways, gas giant and ocean refueling times and various other minor additions. Also included are additional DMs for personal combat (including for cover, concealment, darkness, and zero-G), a totally revised set of matrices and tables for patron encounters, with quite a few new patron types, a table of general rumor types, and a score or more of new event types for use with the animal encounter tables, and several new items of equipment from video and voice recorders to ocean-going destroyers. Even owners of the second-edition rules might find ***The Traveller Book*** worth looking into.

Another feature of note is the inclusion of a variety of interior illustrations by Bill Keith, Liz Danforth, and others, some having appeared previously in the *Journal* and elsewhere, others obviously new for this volume. Most noteworthy here are the depictions of the basic ***Traveller*** weaponry – from daggers, broadswords, cutlasses, and halberds to autorifles, shotguns, SMGs, and laser rifles – and of the standard design ***Traveller*** starships and small craft. Several of these vessels have appeared in illustrated form in other releases, but here for the first time we get to see what a Type-A Free Trader (exterior), a Type-M Subsidized Liner (merchant in the first edition), a Type-Y Yacht, a 400-ton Patrol Cruiser, and a Safari Ship (included here along with the Lab Ship from ***Citizens of the Imperium***) look like. These and the other illustrations (including a portrait of old Jamison, now Alexander Lascalles Jamison, the sample character) serve to make ***The Traveller Book*** more visually attractive than any of the SFRPG's earlier incarnations.

It would be difficult and tedious to attempt to note *all* the differences to be found between second-edition Books 1-3 and the hardback (although in preparation for the review, I did just that – whew!) A few other changes that devoted players and refs might find handy include the expansion of the travel time table (showing the time to reach safe jump distances from the various world sizes), new values on the gravity template tables for Jupiter and the other gas giants of our solar system, the addition of antidotes for fast and slow drugs, and the movement rates per combat round when using the square 1.5-meter-scale grid for movement rather than the range bands. Some of the new events described for animal encounters are highly imaginative and can cause no few problems for a group of adventurers. These are divided into unusual animal, plant, weather, natural disaster, terrain feature, curiosity, and vacuum world events. (My particular favorite is Rutting Season, the result of which sends a beast into a furious attack on the group's ATV, thinking it to be a rival for its mate.)

Another highlight is the new full-page equipment table. This lists all the various types of equipment – including weapons, ammo, and armor – in one place, with TLs, cost, and weight all right at your fingertips. It might even be worth GDW's time to release this, along with some of the other important tables, on a referee's screen of some sort, since the old Judges Guild screen is pretty much obsolete.

I might point out a couple of contradictions in the new text just to keep this review balanced (ah, yes, just like everything else, ***The Traveller Book*** is not perfect). For example, in the new guidelines on gas giant refueling, shown in the Starship section, it is stated that the process takes eight hours. Yet, in the Worlds sec-



Marc Miller has been designing games since 1972. Although his games cover a range of subjects from ancient warfare to modern naval actions, he prefers designing and writing adventures for ***Traveller.***

tion, a week is given as the time for such refueling. Since the latter sounds much too long, I can only assume that the week is intended to include transit time from the neighboring world to the gas giant or vice versa, but if this is so, it should have been clarified. A less easily-explained contradiction concerns square grid movement. In the text, it states that walking time per round is 8 squares, 16 if running. Yet, on the chart and table page, one combat range band – the distance that can be walked in one round – is given as equivalent to 17 1.5-meter squares, which means that a character could walk twice as far in a round with this scale than he could with the rate given in the text. Until GDW issues an erratum clearing this up, the referee will probably have to decide on his own how far per round characters can move on a square grid. (I like the 8/16 better myself, as it keeps characters from running all over most maps in a round or two; players will, of course, wish for the longer distance.)

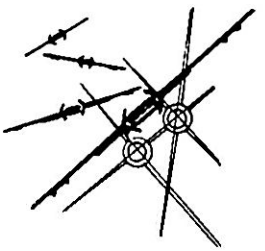
So much for the sections of ***The Traveller Book*** that parallel Books 1-3. What about the rest of the material? As noted, the most useful parts of Book 0, ***Introduction to Traveller,*** appear as the introduction to ***TTB.*** This section is most helpful to the beginning ref, as was Book 0 itself. Experienced refs can skip it. In the back, however, is a section titled "Referee's Guide to Adventuring," which is useful even to experienced refs. As near as I can remember it, this is Marc Miller's own philosophy of refereeing ***Traveller*** as he presented it at several seminars last year. He covers methods of running a successful campaign, with such components as The Gimmick, The Pull, and The Push – methods to get the players moving in a rewarding (or otherwise) direction. Even after several years of reffing, I find these suggestions and keys useful to keep in mind – they can quite literally make the difference between a campaign that is an exciting quest and one that descends into tedium.

The remainder of the book's 160 pages is devoted to aiding the beginning ref get started on a campaign – or the experienced ref who has nothing prepared, but finds players wanting him to run a game on the spot. "Into the Subsector" provides some scenario outlines that can be expanded into evening-long adventures, including four ***76 Patrons*** patron encounters, a Casual Encounter (a *Journal* feature fleshing out an NPC for use in adventure situations) appearing here for the first time, and an Amber Zone situation which originally appeared in *Journal* 2 (and *Best of* 1) as The Ship in the Lake. Following that are two complete short adventures: ***Shadows,*** from Double Adventure 1, reprinted in its entirety (except for the pregenerated characters and, unfortunately, the library data concerning the faulty atmospheric testers), even to the inclusion of the erroneous DMs for vacc suit skill (change the +DMs to -DMs to correct these), and ***Exit Visa,*** which originally appeared under a different name and in slightly different form as a folio adventure in *Adventure Gaming* magazine.

In addition to the adventures, several sections give basic outlines of the official ***Traveller*** universe, including mini-essays on the Imperium, megacorporations, and the Spinward Marches, five pages of library data culled from the various adventures and supplements, and a subsector map of the Regina subsector with corresponding planetary stats. To round off the package, there is a page of nine pregenerated characters (with terms and skills refelcting the revised rules) and several Thugs, Brigands, and Assailants ***a la 1001 Characters;*** a page of three animal encounter tables, specifically for use with the Amber Zone, but usable in other instances in a pinch, and, of course, the obligatory list of other materials in the ***Traveller*** series.

Overall conclusion? I certainly wish that ***The Traveller Book*** had been available when I first started playing ***Traveller,*** and especially when I started reffing. If you already own the second-edition rules, you may find the extra $15 the hardback will cost you a bit much for now. But if you're still using the first-edition rules, I'd recommend that you go ahead and invest in it. If you're a new player who has yet to purchase any of the rules and you're undecided whether to go for ***Deluxe Traveller*** or ***The Traveller Book,*** I urge you go with the latter. Not only will you find it more informative, more attractive, and more durable, if you want to carry as much as possible in your briefcase/box/bag/whatever, you'll find it takes up a lot less room than ***Deluxe*** – which leaves more room for the supplements, adventures, miniatures, and whatever else. And it'll look nicer on your bookshelf, along with the rest of the promised hardback ***Traveller*** series – ***The Traveller Adventure, The Traveller Encyclopedia, The Traveller Alien, The Traveller Starfleet, The Traveller Soldier, The Traveller Campaign, et al*** – as GDW crashes into the hardback RPG market in a big way.

***The Traveller Book is designed by Marc W. Miller and published by Game Designers' Workshop. It retails for $14.98 and is published in an 8½" x 11" 160-page hardback book format.***

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# The Return of IGDRIP

## by Allen Varney

My good friend Harry, computer genius and game designer extraordinaire, was showing me how he had turned *The Marriage of Figaro* into a wargame when there came a stern knock on his laboratory door. In strutted a peculiar-looking bird, ramrod-straight, who glared at us with eyes like someone out of Edgar Allan Poe.

He spoke in an accent I couldn't place, like a cross between Krazy Kat and the Katzenjammer Kids. "Vhich of you iz ther owning-a-game-dersigning-compooter person?"

Harry beamed and stepped forward. "That's me, sir, and if you want a game made to order, this is the device for you!" He gestured grandly at a large conglomeration of processing units taking up half the lab, within which dwelt the Instantaneous Game Design and Rules Intensification Program we knew affectionately as IGDRIP.

"It vhill dersign a role-playing game for me, yes?" The fellow shot each word like a bullet, but Harry didn't notice, of course. He was too busy rhapsodizing.

"*Any* idea for *any* role-playing game on *any* subject can be plucked from your head like a martini olive, sir, and IGDRIP here will instantly convert it into a functional, fully-playtested game!" Harry tends to fall into commercial spiels too easily. His newspaper ads read this way, too, which I think is why he attracts a sometimes peculiar variety of clientele.

"Here is the wondrous Mind-Scanner," Harry continued, pointing to an ugly box, "and here is IGDRIP him – er, *it*self," pointing to an uglier box, "the miracle machine which implements, augments, and supplements your game idea, ending forever the drudgery, the *tedium* of workaday designing. A titan of modern computer engineering, which I – ahem! – designed myself. No, please, it was nothing, really." The peculiar bird made no reaction at all. Harry coughed and moved to the ugliest box of all, one I hadn't seen in previous visits. It was covered with doors, panels, and slanting chutes. "And lastly, to show that IGDRIP keeps abreast of *all* the latest developments, this wonderful new attachment which provides you with that popular addition to any role-playing game . . . "

"Enuff of sells-pitches. Here is money." The guy handed over a roll of green paper large enough to wallpaper a doghouse. "I vish a role-pleying game that ejjucates modren-day childs to a grrreat menace in zociety." This rather quelled the conversation.

Harry's effervescent enthusiasm quieted to a slow fizz as he set to fitting the ramrod-straight customer – whose name, it developed, was Reinhold Dring – with the Mind-Scanner (excuse me, the *Wondrous* Mind-Scanner). "Just two seconds while I circumvent the Six-Dimensional Inverter, here – ah! – and, um, rotate the old Interdevolutionary Contraindicator – no, that's the wrong way . . . " He finally got everything straightened out, told Dring to think clearly and hold still, and pressed a button. "Done!" he said.

"Vhat now?" Dring asked, freeing himself from the wondrous Mind-Scanner.

"Now IGDRIP is formulating, cogitating, developing, and any moment will deliver to us a detailed printout, giving the rules of your own RPG!" said Harry, bubbling. "Meanwhile, I'd like to draw your attention to this new addition over here." He headed back to the ugly chute-covered box. "It provides to you, at no additional charge, that indispensable element in any true campaign . . . " But he was interrupted just as he had pulled Dring over to the unit. Just then IGDRIP beeped, signaling that it had completed the first stage of its labors, and with a disgusting belch it disgorged a large printout.

Dring, Harry, and I huddled over the instructions as the machine continued to putter away.

"CANCELLATION! (we read) is the multi-player role-playing game that lets YOU take your revenge on that loathesome, nefarious, perverted element of society, that subverter of all sacred and right-thinking institutions, that disgusting filth dedicated to undermining *your* and *my* way of life, the *mailman!*"

That was just the first sentence. I looked again; it really said "mailman."

"Bearer of bills, income tax forms, hate mail from your worthless cousin Sergei who couldn't make a dollar if he had his own printing press, *ptah!*, bringer of letters from your former fiancee Emmeline who ran off with an insurance salesman to Buenos Aires, *die!*, courier of spiteful notes from your parents in the Old Country who still think you deserted them even though they *forced* you to leave with their endless squalling insistence that you milk their bloody cows and feed those ungodly stupid chickens every day, *starve, you lousy birds!*, – messenger of all these everyday, ordinary tragedies, it is the *mailman*, the cursed letter carrier, who is entirely responsible for the decay of world society. In CANCELLATION! players assume the roles of social reformers who go out to rid the planet of this insidious menace."

Dring was cackling fiendishly. The leer on his face moved him out of the Edgar Allen Poe category and into H. P. Lovecraft. My spine began to feel cold as I thought of my brother-in-law Herb. *He* was a mailman, and though he ate oranges with mustard and called *Napoleon at Waterloo* "overwhelmingly complex," he was really a decent sort.

I skipped further into the printout. In the first section, CHARACTER ROLES, there was this: "Players roll four 11-sided dice to determine their ability levels for Strength, Literacy, Infiltration, Cunning, Ferocity, Violence, Virulence, Lethality, Deadliness, Deathfulness, Deathlikeness, *hahaha!*, and Charisma. Based on these die-rolls, players assume the characters of *Legislators* (fighting up through higher and higher courts to abolish this threat legally), *Spies* (who infiltrate the Postal Service, sabotaging the conspiracy from within), or *Assassins* (the most *direct* and *desirable* role of all!)."

I skipped more. Under WEAPONS were listings like "Postal Meter/Finger Crusher," "Mailbag Bludgeon," and "+2 Icy Sidewalk." One item went like this:

"VICIOUS DOG. This fearless upholder of morality is found in 30% of front lawns and will attack anything wearing blue-gray outfits and worn shoes. Dogs do three 15-sided dice to the front of the body or four 17-sided dice to the rear. *Good!* Mailmen must make saving rolls against rabies."

By now Dring's expression had moved him out of H. P. Lovecraft and into Ray Harryhausen. He continued to chuckle over the printout as I drew my friend aside.

"Harry," I whispered, "we're dealing with *major weirdness* here."

"He *is* sort of loosely-tuned, isn't he?" Harry answered, displaying uncharacteristic powers of observation. "Did you see that printout? That's not IGDRIP! Like we computer people say, 'Garbage in, garbage out.' "

IGDRIP belched again and printed out a large map and another thick sheaf of computer paper. We looked at both as Dring strutted over to loom over us and cackle. "Ther game-map of ther kempaign vorld, yes?"

"This is a map of our city!" I observed.

"And look at these location descriptions," Harry said, leafing through the printout. He read aloud. " 'Beneath the Murphy Street Overpass' – I drive that every day! – 'is an excellent location for Assassins to lie in wait for passing letter carriers. Gunshots will be drowned in the noise of traffic. Mailmen usually pass by at 10:20 a.m. and 1:30, 2:15, and 4:15 p.m. Monday through Saturday.' "

"I heff done my rezirch," Dring said proudly.

I had a sinking feeling. I located a certain spot on the map, found the key-number there, and rooted through the printout. There it was: "386. *1472 Elm Street.* One mailman can be found here in the early morning and the evenings. Eats oranges with mustard and calls *Napoleon at Waterloo* "overwhelmingly complex."

"I heff done *lots* of rezirch," Dring said very proudly.

"Say there, sir," Harry chirped, "you, uh, you take these funny little games pretty, um, *seriously*, don't you?" This from the man who once nearly assaulted his own nephew for running across his *War in the East* map at a crucial moment of play.

"They are tools, poor end semple, by vhich I convey my sekrid trost to my fellow hooman bings. Ve must all bend togeddir end combat this menace."

"Yes, naturally," said Henry, still bright and jovial, "but do you think that – well – just for the sake of argument, now, suppose *not every* postal employee is *necessarily* evil, I mean, I mail packages quite often myself, and the old gentleman behind the counter at the local post office is *always* polite, you know . . . "

This struck me as precisely the wrong thing to say under the circumstances, an impression only strengthened as the peculiar bird began to get all wide-eyed and frigid during Harry's little speech. *"You* – ?" he broke in. *"You* heff dealings vith ther Postal Zerviss?" His voice was a screech.

"Um – well, you know – well, not *exactly* – uhh . . . "

*"Conspirators!"* Dring hissed. "I heff blondered into enemy hends!" He drew a revolver (which immediately became the only thing in my universe) and pointed it right at me – at us, I should say. The gun-barrel was at least six feet long and must have fired mortar shells at least.

"Back up against there!" said the gun. We backed up against the wondrous Mind-Scanner while the gun took Harry's roll of bills back. "I heff the rools and ther kempaign map. Vhat more is still upkomming?"

Harry gulped for a second and found his voice. "Just – eh, um, hm! just the last addition that I was, was trying to tuh-tell you about, um, earlier. Sir. It comes out there." He must have gestured, because the gun moved over by the ugly new unit with the chutes and panels. "Vhat komms out from this up-above chute here?" it said.

"A large number of . . . " Harry began, when IGDRIP belched and the gun was suddenly buried under an avalanche of metal. I looked more closely and saw that Dring and his revolver had been covered with little lead figurines, thousands of them, each an inch-high replica of a letter-carrier, a dog, or a mailbox.

" . . . Miniatures," Harry finished, unnecessarily.

"I'll call the police," I said. "That new monster of yours sure came in handy. When did you get that, anyway?"

"I ordered it from Silicon Valley a while back," he answered as he shoveled figurines off the unconscious Dring. "Yesterday it came Special Deliv . . . " He stopped.

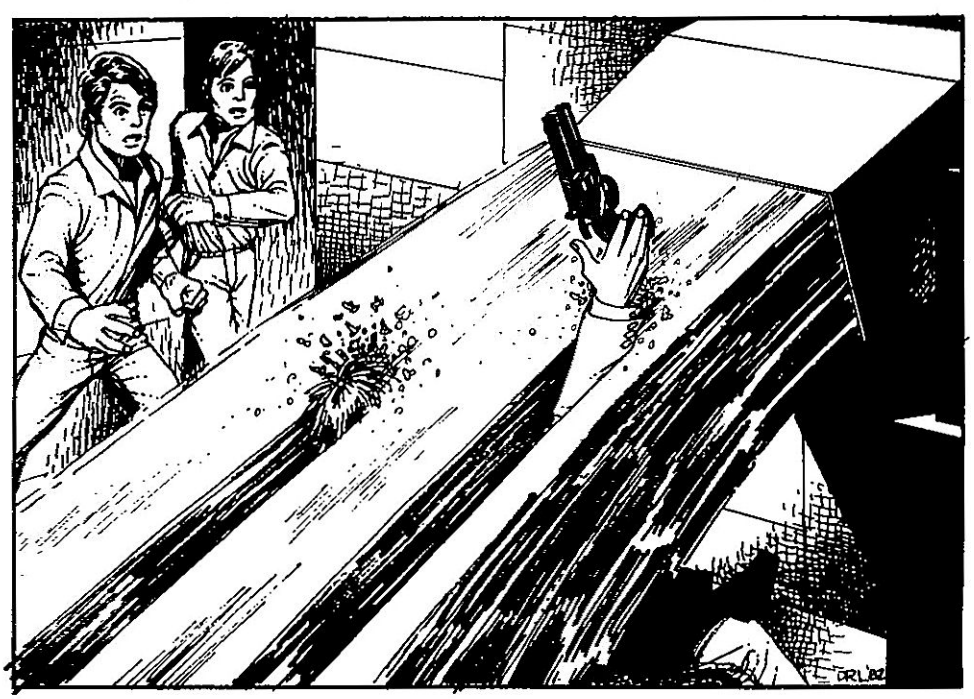
I stopped too, the phone at my ear. "By – um – mail?" I inquired.

"Eh – yes." He looked at the ugly box through new eyes. "Say, he was speaking total nonsense, wasn't he?"

"Yeah," I said. "Completely crazy. Nothing to it." I began to dial. "I'm almost sure of it." I finished dialing. "I think."

"Yeah," said Harry. "Of course."

IGDRIP belched happily.



# Illuminating the Post Office (and Other Atrocities)

## by Steve Jackson

They're all out to get us. Everybody knows that. That's what ***Illuminati*** is all about: conspiracies.

But what if we left your favorite conspiracy out of the game . . . or, worse yet, relegated it to a secondary role? Certainly the crusading Reinhold Dring, as he struggled against the evil Post Office, would have been unhappy to learn that they weren't even Illuminated!

Well, Mr. Dring, weep no longer. This article will take six of the most paranoia-inducing "group" cards from ***Illuminati*** and (ahem!) illuminate them. If you think that the evil in the world really comes from the Post Office (or the Mafia, or the Oil Companies) – now you can prove it.

To "illuminate" any regular card (that is, make it into an Illuminati card), you should

(a) Ignore the power, resistance, and income numbers printed on the card. Illuminati cannot be taken over, so they have no resistance – and the power and income of a group will change after it is Illuminated.

(b) Change the arrows on the card. Each Illuminati group should have four outgoing arrows.

(c) Ignore the indicated alignments. The groups are now beyond alignment.

You may want to mark changes on the cards themselves – but check first to make sure the instrument you're marking with isn't permanent. Or make up a brand new card out of light cardboard and set the original card aside. Or keep the changes in your head. Whatever you do, prepare for some amusing results . . . and some brand new interactions between competing Illuminati . . . when the new conspirators come into play.

### The (Illuminated) Mafia

Power: 8 / 8. Income: 8.

Special power: +3 for control of any criminal group, as shown on card.

Special victory condition: Control five criminal and/or government groups. The IRS is both criminal and government, so it counts double if controlled.

### The (Illuminated) Phone Company

Power: 7 / 7. Income: 9.

Special power: At any time, the Illuminated Phone Company may look at any special card held by any other player. (The Phone Company may not *show* the card to other players, but may *tell* them what it is.)

Special victory condition: Control four straight groups (in order to hypnotize them into using the telephone constantly like good Middle Americans).

### The (Illuminated) Multinational Oil Companies

Power: 7 / 7. Income: 11.

Special power: Any 0-income group controlled by them gets income 1.

Special victory condition: Destroy the IRS (themselves or through a controlled group – destruction by another Illuminated group does not count). No explanation of this victory condition should really be necessary . . .

### The (Illuminated) Post Office

Power: 8 / 8. Income: 5.

Special power: At the end of his turn, the Post Office player can choose one other player – who will lose his next turn. The Post Office may not do this to the same player twice in a row, and does not have to choose any player.

Special victory condition: Monopolize all communications! If the Phone Company is in the game as an Illuminati group, the Post Office wins if they are destroyed (in any way, by any player). If the Phone Company is not Illuminated, the Post Office can win by destroying and/or controlling the Phone Company, Hollywood, and Madison Avenue.

### The (Illuminated) International Communist Conspiracy

Power: 9 / 9. Income: 7.

Special power: +3 for control of any Communist group.

Special victory condition: Control seven groups that are Liberal and/or Communist. (The S.L.A. is both Liberal and Communist, so it counts double if controlled.)

### The (Illuminated) Wargamers

Power: 5 / 5. Income: 4.

Special power: Unlike other Illuminati groups, the Illuminated Wargamers are manipulating the world just for fun. Therefore, they cannot be destroyed, even if they lose all their subsidiary groups.

Special victory condition: Prolong the game! The Illuminated Wargamers' objective is to keep other Illuminati from taking over the world completely; they want to keep the power game going, because it *is* a game to them. Therefore, on his 15th turn, and on every turn thereafter, the Wargamer player rolls one die. If he rolls a 6, the game ends immediately and he wins.

Most of the groups in ***Illuminati*** can be Illuminated by similar means. Play with it; you may learn things man was not meant to know. If you learn anything especially good, send it to us; we'd like to see some ingenious reader-Illuminated power groups.

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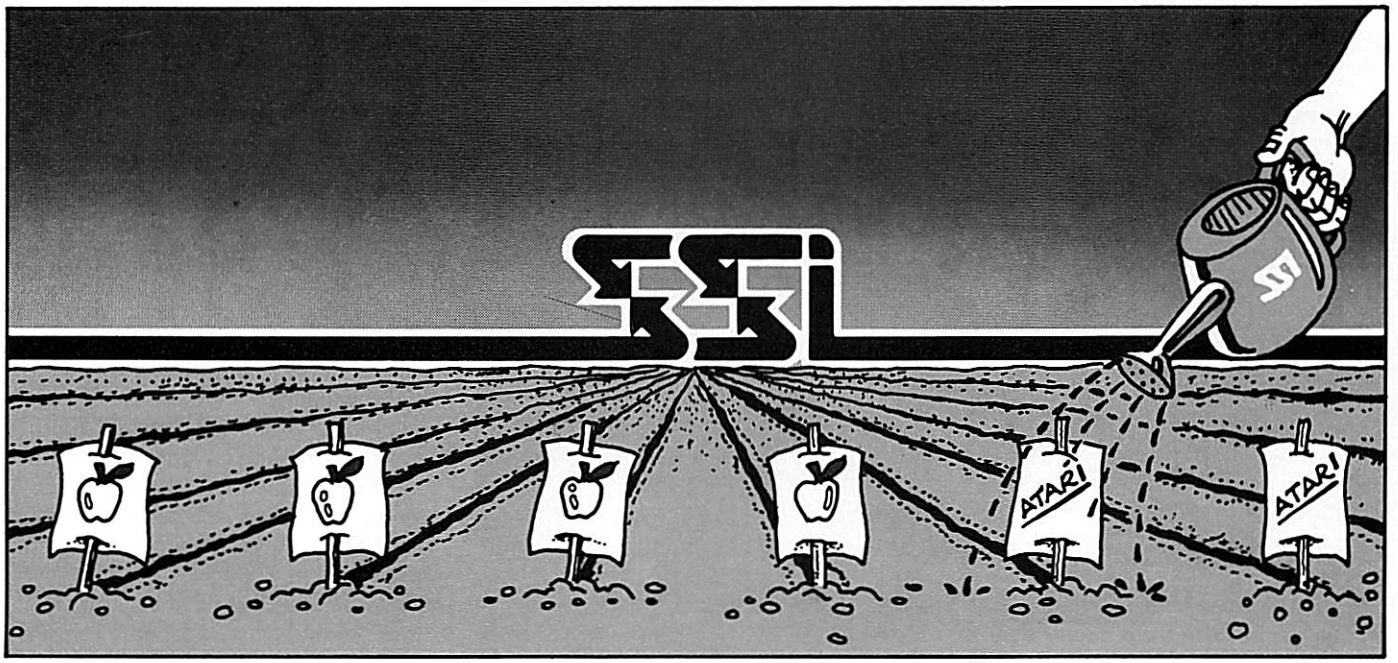
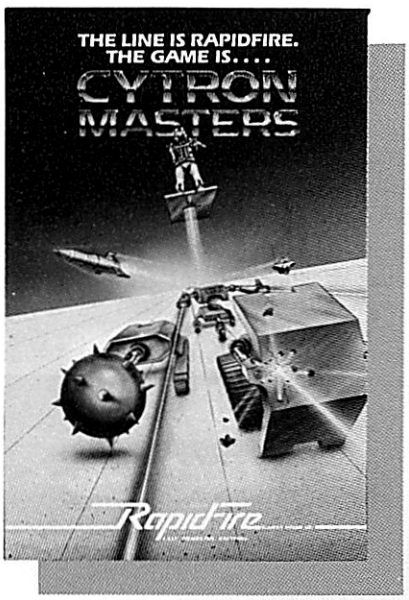
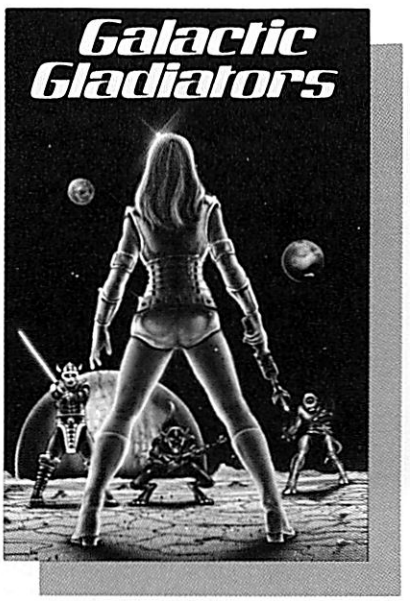
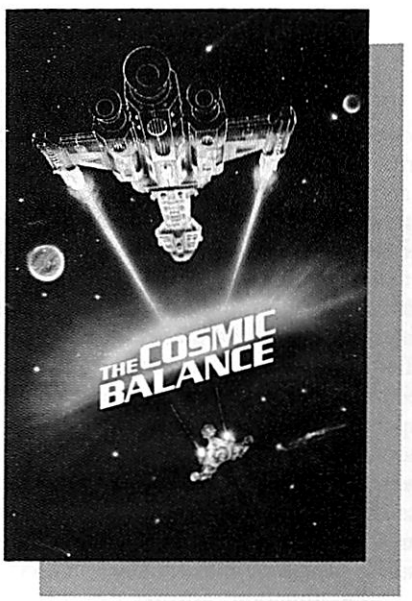



# INTRODUCING SOME NEW FRUITS OF OUR LABOR...FOR THE ATARI®

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# Featured Review: SSI's RapidFire Line

by Chris Smith

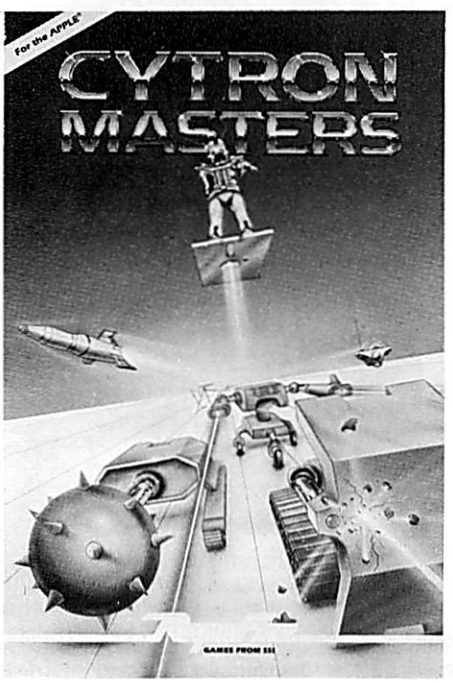
Long known for its slow-but-accurate computer games (***The Warp Factor*** et al.), SSI has now outdone itself. The new RapidFire game line is interesting, innovative, and *quick-moving*. Attractively boxed with eye-catching covers, these four games examine futuristic combat from four different angles.

### Cytron Masters

This game has an unusual setting for combat: Wars are fought in arenas, not battlefields. In the two-player version, each player controls an army composed of machines called Cytrons; in the solitaire version, the computer is the opponent.

There are six types of cytrons, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. *Shooters* are laser-armed, but are easily killed; *Bunkers* can take several hits before becoming useless, but have no offensive capability; *Mines* are more powerful than shooters, but must come in contact with their target, and each one may only be used once; *Commanders* allow for the control of a group of cytrons (orders must usually be given individually), but have no other function; *Missiles* can attack a small group rather than an individual, but are expensive; and *Anti-missiles* can shoot down missiles, but have no other function, and don't always arrive on time.

As the game begins, each player owns one command center, four power centers, and as many cytrons as he cares to purchase with the initial power allotment. As the game progresses, power is gained from the power centers and may be saved or used immediately to make new cytrons. Power centers may be captured, but the main objective is to place a mine in your opponent's command center, which destroys it and ends the game. All cytrons (except missiles and anti-missiles, which are handled differently) move at the same rate. Commands allow the players to make new cytrons and to move the ones on the board, but do not allow players to specify targets for their shooters, the main offensive weapon. Shooters choose their own target according to a strict program. It is up to the player to position them properly.




***Cytron Masters*** requires a bit of tactical know-how, and its real-time command system gives it a slight arcade feel. I think this is the perfect combination of arcade and board game. My only complaint involves the game's solitaire version: The computer, as opponent, does not become a progressively better player as the human does, it merely gains a compensating extra amount of power from the power centers.

A last good point which I should mention concerns the game's instructions. Although it has the normal rulebook obligatory to complex computer games, ***Cytron Masters*** also has a half-hour instruction program on the disk, complete with visual examples! The rulebook itself isn't necessary except to clarify a few fine rules points.

### Galactic Gladiators

This game depicts man-to-man combat in the far-flung future. Players square off, commanding teams of one to ten fighters each. Utilizing a wide assortment of weaponry, the teams fight to the finish in a bar, a spaceship, or outside. The players must determine their team members' individual actions secretly at the beginning of each turn and then watch the action as it plays out.

After decisions have been made about team composition, weaponry, armor, and battlefield choice, the characters must be placed on the game grid, either randomly or by player choice. Then begins the first turn, which is usually the longest turn of the game – it's the first opportunity you have to view your opponent's team. Commands available allow a character to move, dodge, attack, move and attack, reload a weapon, rest, change weapons, or (if all else fails) surrender. Objects strewn about the battlefield, called "blocks," inhibit movement but may sometimes be fired over. (Blocks can also be destroyed by heat ray guns, which apparently have no other function.) Characters which are killed or knocked out are taken out of the game.

This game has two very strong points:

secret movement and freshness. The secret movement aspect is handled simply by entering your team's actions while the other player looks away from the screen; the importance of guessing right can be pretty high.

By "freshness" I mean that no game is like another. Players choose between seven regular character species, seven special character species, a subroutine for creating the monster race of your choice, twelve different types of weapons, three sizes of battlefield, and three types of terrain blocks in any combination, and your choices of battles become quite varied.

Ironically, the game's worst problem also involves secret movement. The characters follow orders too closely. If you tell character A to attack character B, but during the next movement phase the intended victim runs away and is replaced by C, A will still attempt to attack B even though it is patently impossible. This mindless adherence to orders takes a little away from the game.

### The Cosmic Balance

This is a standard game of starship-to-starship combat, complete with phasers, photons, ECM, shields, and various other chrome. The difference between this game and some others comes before combat: You design your own ships. Construction rules are somewhat more complex than the combat rules, but with a little patience and a lot of practice you'll be turning out a winning combination every time you sit down.

But then you'll find out that no winner is sure-fire. A ship's main strengths are speed, offense, and defense, and you simply can't boost one without sacrificing one or both of the others.

The ship construction program itself is very user-friendly. Single key strokes are used wherever possible, eliminating the need to use the return key excessively. The ship designer must pay attention to shield strength, weapons capabilities, engine size, and (unlike most other such games) breathing space for the crew. One thing which is stressed in the instruction manual is that a happy crew is an efficient crew; the more room they have, the better overall performance of your ship.

Entering the actual combat portion of the program, you will find commands which allow you to allocate energy to the various ship systems in order to maneuver, fire weapons, reenergize shields, put up ECM screens, utilize ECCM, and launch guided weapons such as fighters and seekers. After entering your commands, you sit back and watch the action play out, centering on the ship of your choice at the scale of your choice. The animation is very passable and is much better than the standard "disappear, move X up and Y left, reappear," which is the norm for this type of game.

The shipbuilding is the main point of the game for me. The battlefield is simply a test bench that tells you what you need to improve your design. Although winning a battle requires skill as well as a good ship, I have seen enough of this type of game, minus the construction routines, to be more interested in the actual ship design than the rest of the program.

### S.E.U.I.S.

I've saved this game for the last, but not because it's the best. ***S.E.U.I.S.***, pronounced "soos" and standing for "Shoot 'Em Up In Space," is the worst of a good set of games. In another line it would probably stand out, but in the distinguished company of RapidFire's other titles, it leaves something to be desired. Its basic premise — combining a strategic space game with arcade ship-to-ship combat — is a good one, but it just doesn't live up to expectations.

Players start the game with a fleet which must be broken into squadrons and directed around the star map in an attempt to capture and hold onto resource centers. When enemy squadrons meet, time shifts to the tactical level and the game is kicked over to an arcade-style shoot 'em up. The only way to discover the composition of an enemy squadron (other than its reference as "light," "medium," and "heavy") is to engage it in battle.

The game didn't live up to my expectations because it is just too plain, too ordinary. This was the last of the line to be delivered to TSG for review; when it arrived, I jumped on it. My resulting disappointment lay in the fact that this game, unlike the others in the line, added nothing new to the computer game field. Combining strategic space games with arcade was a good idea, but there are still better arcade games of both kinds.

### Overview

RapidFire is a game line that deserves any award it can be nominated for. It is the best line of computer games I've ever seen, and the programs rate high on an individual basis also. My biggest complaint about the series is that it has only four offerings now. Let's see some more, SSI!

*All of the RapidFire games are for the 48K Apple II+ with one disk drive, published by Strategic Simulations, Inc. in 1982. Cost of each game is $39.95; each program has a two-player and a solitaire version.*

*CYTRON MASTERS; designed by Dan Bunten. Twelve-page rulebook and disk. May be "paused" but not saved. Paddles required.*

*GALACTIC GLADIATORS; designed by Tom Reamy. Twenty-eight page rulebook, disk, players' aid card. Teams may be saved.*

*THE COSMIC BALANCE; designed by Paul Murray. Twenty-nine page rulebook, disk, four lines of errata. Ships may be saved.*

*S.E.U.I.S.; designed by John Lyon. Twenty-seven page rulebook and disk. May be saved. Paddles required.*

# METAL

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## by John Rankin

**". . . the best of times,
the worst of times."**

On the one hand, 1982 was a year of incredible growth, diversification, qualitative improvement, and overall hobby market penetration for the miniatures industry. On the other hand, a distressingly stagnant economy put a crimp in everyone's payday. That the miniatures field enjoyed a banner year anyway indicates better things to come. But before that can happen, the recession is going to have to end. A quick look at some of the high- and lowlights of the past year will illustrate this point. Next month I'll try to tie all this together and offer a prediction or two on what we might expect in '83.

*Ral Partha* underwent internal upheaval this past summer as long-time president Glenn Kidd was replaced by Jack Hesselbrock. Marketing strategy was reportedly the primary object of disagreement. While it may sound corny, the Parthans made a big thing out of rededicating themselves to the principles, both business and artistic, that built the company. It's working. At present, the only problem confronting them is how to fill their record Christmas orders.

*Grenadier* decided that merger with TSR is not such a good idea. Apparently, TSR's heavy-handed buy-out attempts and their blundering SPI takeover were enough to convince Grenadier that they'd just as soon chart their own course. Evidence of this independence surfaced when Grenadier joined GAMA. Grenadier's penetration of the "mass market" this past year has been staggering, and even without the ***AD&D*** logo on their packaging (a contingency reportedly already prepared for), Grenadier looks rock-solid.

During '82, *Heritage* lost father figure Duke Seifried to TSR. Duke was both a tremendous marketing asset and something of a liability – many of his transactions had been based purely on the strength of his personality. New president Howard Barasch has pursued a policy of low-key marketing, expansion into new areas, and increased emphasis on quality control in an attempt to rebuild Heritage's market position. Much of Heritage's success has been in non-miniature areas (Dwarfstar minigames) and this may well be the area of emphasis for the future (remember the *Conan* miniatures line?). In November, Heritage filed for Chapter XI. This does not mean bankruptcy, but rather a reorganization of debts under the auspices of a federal judge. Hopefully this will allow Heritage to get back to work and quit worrying about the rent. Considering some of the sure winners they have ready for release (including ***Champions*** superhero figures), an improvement in cash flow could do wonders for this company, which seems perpetually to be under the gun.

*Minifigs*, once the monster of the midway in this business, has also had cash flow problems. The less-than-spectacular showing of their single-pack fantasy figures and hard times for the parent British company have made times rough. As if that weren't enough, Minifigs' TSR license (***World of Greyhawk***) probably won't be renewed. While Minifigs remains a prolific producer of historical figures, the fantasy market is what currently drives this industry, and Minifigs' steady loss of share is disturbing.

Perhaps the most ironic cash flow story comes from our old extraterrestrial friends, the Martians. *Martian Metals* has a superb line of 15mm ***Striker*** vehicles for ***Traveller*** finished and awaiting release. These models are a shoe-in for an H.G. Wells Award at Origins '83, their sales potential is immense, and they should have been on the market six months ago. Problem? Simple . . . not enough spare cash on Mars to buy the several tons of metal needed to begin mass production. Solution? Again simple . . . if and when the economy improves, people will pay up faster, the turnover cycle for expansion capital will improve dramatically, and the consumer gets more new products.

If the financial times are hard for established companies, think about the difficulties of trying to start a new business in the teeth of a recession (which includes the last three years, at least). A quick look at recent efforts should be interesting. I'll call it . . .

### A Tale of Two Companies

*Saxon Miniatures* debuted at the HIA show early in '82 with two strong assets. The first is Conan Scanlon, a personable young guy with the talent and potential to be one of the very best figure sculptors in the business. The second is Jerry Trager, a seasoned hobby marketing rep. Aside from a small batch of new releases at Origins, though, Saxon has maintained such a low profile that their presence has hardly been felt. If the economy loosens up, we'll probably see Trager give this line the promotional push it will need to get rolling. If growth capital remains hard to come by, Saxon could well pass away quietly.

*Castle Creations* came to Origins with an extremely large line for a new company, a policy of seeking name recognition licenses (particularly with Fantasy Games Unlimited), and a very good understanding of how the market works. What they didn't have was first-class sculpting. Successive releases have shown marked improvement. If this upgrading continues (and it must, to compete with some of the extraordinary work being turned out elsewhere), CC would seem to have all the other requisites necessary to crack the market in a big way.

It's interesting to speculate what the sculpting genius of a Conan Scanlon might accomplish in the high energy atmosphere of a company like Castle Creations. In fact, "Saxon/Castle" has a rather distinguished ring to it. Maybe you guys should get in touch.

### The Big One

Perhaps the most important story of the year comes by way of that adventure gaming Mecca, Smyrna, Georgia. Once upon a time, Jay Adams and Bob Maurus had a miniatures company called *Broadsword.* Both sculpted, and they turned out a quality product. Apparently, though, they didn't get along – so Bob dropped out. Jay sold the company to Bill Green (owner of Sword of the Phoenix retail stores and *Phoenix Enterprises* game publishers). Then Jay dropped out and Bob rejoined, which is how things stand now. Broadsword seems to be doing well, but what about Jay?

The Gnomes of Lake Geneva spent the year looking to buy a miniatures company. Grenadier said no thank you. Ral Partha said "Sure, that'll be seven million dollars," and the dragon went hunting for easier prey. Heritage, which could have been a contender, was knocked out by (a) their financial liabilities, (b) bad feelings from Duke's departure, (c) other. Take your pick. Nowhere could an unblemished bride be found. And so the Wizards created their own. With Uncle Duke making the arrangements, TSR has reportedly ordered vast quantities of casting machinery. Many sculptors, freelance and otherwise, have been approached. Of the two actually hired to date, one is Bob DeZomitz. The other is – you guessed it – Jay Adams.

I'll examine what this means next month and perhaps provide a clue or two as to whether '83 will be a golden year for lead.

### Flash!

As this column is being yanked from my hands for typesetting (November 17), I have learned that Duke Seifried and another top TSR executive have arrived in Dallas. Heritage owner Ray Stockman confirms they'll have a thing or two to discuss. By next month I hope to be able to relate the final, this time for real, no kidding story of where this is all leading. Stay tuned.

### Superior Models, Inc.

This month marks the 20th anniversary of a company whose name truly describes its products. The single-minded pursuit of quality by founder John Carter (not the Warlord of Mars) has long been appreciated by serious collectors of large-scale military figures, model ships, and pewter *objets d'art.* Superior Creative Services (John's design service) counts among its clients General Motors, General Electric, Du Pont, the State of Delaware and, indirectly, the President of the United States. Each incoming President receives, along with other official gifts, a casting of a limited-edition figure – Ronnie Reagan got a William Penn numbered 0001. Other Superior projects (some under the name of Perth Pewter) include "Gnomes," "Mythology & Fantasy Jewelry," "Animal Sculptures," and antique candlestick holders, much of it done in fine pewter.

Until recently, in fact, adventure gaming was only a small sideline for Superior. Their first effort in this direction was with the *Starships* line and its related future armor line *MAATAC.* While imaginative and well-organized, both lines had flaws. The larger *Starships* were clunky and covered with dozens of weapon turrets obviously stolen from World War II ship models; the *MAATAC* line was bizarre – and neither line was widely available. Nevertheless, they proved popular and new releases show definite improvement in design.

Then came *Wizards and Lizards,* and the adventure gaming community took notice. These figures are sculpted by Ray Lamb, Ron Spicer, and Steve Tufano, and are (in a word) magnificent. Some, such as the knights and Norse gods, are definitive works of art. And if that weren't enough, they're wonderfully easy to paint. But retail availability is poor and may remain so. Superior recently introduced several *Wizards and Lizards* boxed sets (a great improvement over their plastic bag packaging) which will be eagerly sought by retailers. But Superior's problem is not lack of demand for its line – that demand is already high.

Superior's sole distributor, Alnavco, which is involved in several of Superior's projects, would love to see Superior produce more, but where the availability problem finally comes to rest is with John Carter. You see, John likes to create things with metal more than he wants to run a production line. Making new models will always interest him more than turning out lots of old ones, and if quality has to suffer to increase production, forget about production!

Despite my admiration for John Carter's attitude, I probably wouldn't be profiling his company if his figures were any harder to get. Fortunately, Alnavco runs a very efficient (and prompt) mail-order service for the entire Superior line. Send them a buck; specify which line you're interested in, and they'll send you a catalogue illustrated with professionally-done photos of a large number of the figures. It's almost as good as seeing them in a store – and in some ways better, because the multi-piece figures are assembled – and Alnavco will notify you of new releases through their newsletter. If quality is your prime criterion in buying fantasy miniatures, you owe it to yourself to check out *Wizards and Lizards.* And if your miniatures interests cover a broader scope, you'll want to find out all about Superior . . . it's a class act.

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*Owned by:* John Carter and others

*Employees:* 7-9 full-time, 4-6 part-time

*Number of figures sold in 1981:*
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*Mail order available from:*
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Two from the *Wizards and Lizards* line: Knight WL51 and WL38 in Fantascene No. 2.

**Photo courtesy of Alnavco.**

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# OFFICIAL ORIGINS AWARDS NOMINATION BALLOT

*for the year 1982, to be presented at ORIGINS '83, July 14-17, 1983, in Detroit, Michigan*
*(for information about Origins '83, write P.O. Box 787, Troy, Michigan 48099*

The Origins Awards, presented at Origins each year, are an international, popular series of awards aimed at recognizing outstanding achievements in Adventure Gaming. They comprise the Charles Roberts Awards for Boardgaming, and the H.G. Wells Awards for Miniatures and Role-Playing Games. An international Awards Committee of 25 hobbyists (some professionals, but primarily independents) directs and administers the awards system. The nomination ballot is open to all interested gamers. YOUR VOTE can make a real difference! A final ballot is prepared by the committee and voted on by members of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design. Academy membership, $2/year, is open to active, accomplished hobbyists, both pro and amateur. Membership guidelines are available for a SASE from the addresses given below. Correspondence should be sent to the USA address. Present members may renew by sending their check with this ballot. Canadians may send $2 Canadian, payable to Mike Girard. UK and European members may send 1 pound sterling payable to Ian Livingstone. US and all others may send US $2 payable to Bill Somers.

The Academy and the Awards Committee as well as the Origins convention itself, function under the overall direction of GAMA, the Game Manufacturers Association. Direct correspondence to Paul R. Banner, % GDW, Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61701.

**Instructions. Read Carefully**: Print legibly or type your nominations. Ballots that are messy, not filled out correctly, or show attempts at stuffing will not be counted. You may list three nominees per category. It does not matter in what order you list them. To keep the voting as meaningful as possible, do not make selections in unfamiliar categories. YOU MUST SIGN THE BALLOT! And include your address. You may vote only once.

Nominations should be for products produced during the calendar year 1982. Exceptions are permitted for older products which gain significant exposure and acclaim during 1982. Miniature figure series nominations should be for product lines which are either new or have been substantially expanded in 1982. All Time Best nominations are not restricted to 1982, of course.

This ballot may be reproduced and circulated by any means available, provided its contents are faithfully copied. Magazine editors and publishers should plan to include the ballot in an issue of their publications due to come out during the interval from late 1982 to mid-March 1983. Clubs and other organizations should circulate copies among their members shortly after the first of the year.

All Adventure Gamers are encouraged to vote!

**Deadline**--March 31, 1983

## THE H.G. WELLS AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN MINIATURES AND ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

1. Best Historical Figure Series, 1982: _____
2. Best Fantasy/SF Series, 1982: _____
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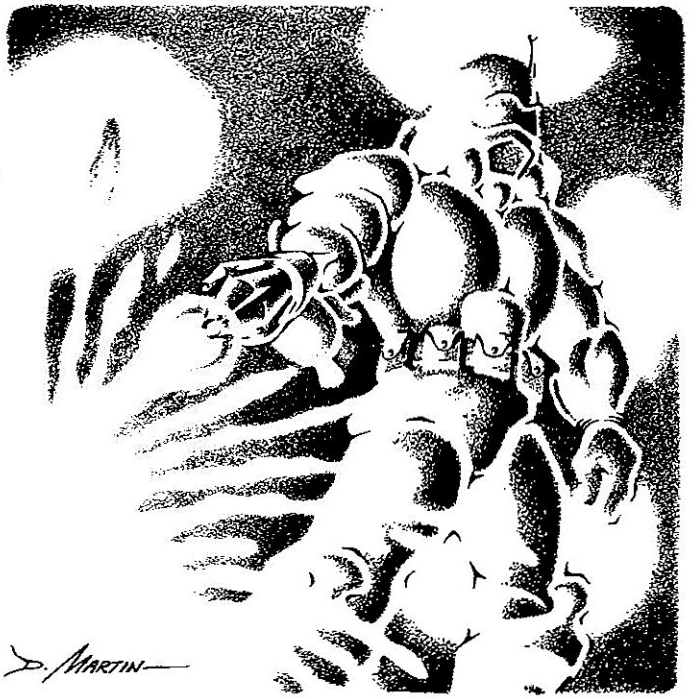
# MAN-TO-MAN COMBAT FROM THE WORLD OF "OGRE"

# BATTLESUIT




*Game design by Steve Jackson*
*Map and counter art by Denis Loubet*
*Playtesters: Chris Smith, Pat Mueller, John Rankin, Gary Berg, David Ladyman, Jim Gould, Kelly Grimes*
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## 1.00 INTRODUCTION

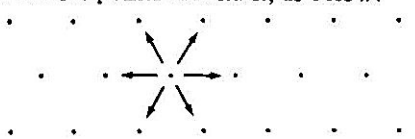
BATTLESUIT is a two-player game of combat between men in "powered armor" which greatly enhances their speed and combat ability. The infantry of 2085 use nuclear projectiles and electronic warfare devices . . . but they are still the units that take and hold ground when nothing else can.

Scale is 37.5 meters between adjacent points and 2 meters (vertically) between contour lines. Each turn takes 10 seconds.

Game components include one 11" x 17" map, 221 two-sided counters, and these rules. You will also need two 6-sided dice and a ruler or straightedge.

## 2.00 MAPSHEET

The map represents an area some 1.2 kilometers long by .8 km wide. It is divided by many "points," arranged in a hexagonal array, which govern movement and combat. Each point is uniquely identified by a letter and number according to the key at the top and side of the map. Each point is considered "adjacent" to the six points around it, as below:



2.01 *Contour lines.* These lines on the map show relative height. The lowest area on the map is "level 1"; the highest is "level 6." Contour lines are two meters apart vertically; therefore, all level 6 areas are 10 meters above all level 1 areas. Contour lines are used to determine whether an attacker has a clear line of sight (LOS) to his target in cases where terrain or cover may intervene.

Contour lines do not run through the map points, but between them. A point between two different contour lines is at the level of the lower line; if the lines are at the same height (i.e., the large central map area) a point between them is at the level below that of the lines. When a line forms a closed loop with no other line inside it, or when a line and the edge of the map form such a loop, all points within that loop are at the level of that line.

2.02 *Cover.* There are three types of cover; they interfere with ground movement but offer protection from enemy fire. "Soft cover" (trees or bushes) is shown by a gray tree-pattern. overlay. "Hard cover" (buildings or vehicles) is shown by a line drawing of the object offering cover. "Bunkers" are not drawn on the map, but are represented by counters.

Units move only on the map points; therefore, a unit is in cover if and only if it is on the ground (see Section 4.05) and on a point within a cover area as described above. No point is ever partly within cover; it is all or nothing.

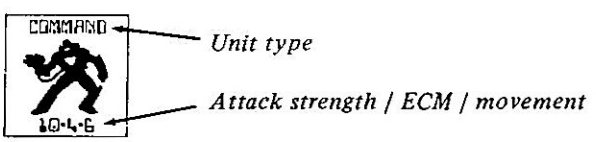
All hard cover is assumed to stand two levels (4 meters) above the underlying terrain. Thus, when flying or tracing LOS over hard cover, treat it as two levels higher than the ground on which it is located. All soft cover stands 3 levels (6 meters) above the ground. Bunkers are flush with ground level.

If a hard-cover or bunker counter is placed in a soft-cover area, units on that point get the benefit of the cover counter but no extra benefit for the surrounding soft cover.

A man can stand on top of hard cover, gaining two levels of elevation but losing its protection. A man is always assumed to be inside cover unless the player states that he is on top of it. A man cannot stand on top of soft cover.

## 3.00 COUNTERS

Each counter represents a single man (with his powered suit, if any), building, wrecked vehicle, or item of equipment. "Chits" to show unit status are also supplied.




3.01 *Infantry.* Ten different kinds of infantry units are supplied. Four represent different models of armor, four represent armor that has suffered various degrees of damage, and two represent infantrymen without powered armor.

The front of each armored infantry counter shows that man in "normal" status; the back of the counter shows the same man in a state of shock (see Section 6.042).

3.011 *Standard suit.* This is the basic type of powered armor. It has an attack value of 8, an ECM (electronic countermeasure) value of 2, and a move of 5.

3.012 *Assault suit.* This is an improved model suit, more effective but more costly. It has an attack value of 10, an ECM value of 3, and a move of 6.

3.013 *Command suit.* This type is identical to the assault suit except in its increased communications ability (not directly shown in the game) and better ECM value. It has a combat value of 10, an ECM value of 4, and a move of 6. Infantry officers at and above platoon level use these suits.

3.014 *Ranger suit.* Another costly improvement on the standard suit, the ranger has improved myoelectric "muscles" and better jets, as well as extra "stealth" electronics; it is designed for raiding and reconnaissance. It has a combat value of 8, an ECM value of 5, and a move of 7.

3.015 *Damaged suits.* Four levels of suit damage are represented by counters ranging from "d1" (the least damaged) through "d4" (almost totally unserviceable). When a suit is damaged, it is replaced by a damaged-suit counter. No distinction is made between (for instance) a suit which was assault-

type and is now d2, and one which was standard-type and is now d2; "d2" represents a certain level of performance regardless of original capability. Damaged suits have various levels of ability, as shown on the Damage Table.

3.016 *Unarmored infantry.* Two types of unarmored infantry units are supplied. Unarmored men have an attack strength of either 3 or 4, no ECM, and a move of 2.

3.02 *Drones.* A "drone" is a self-propelled electronics package with a computer intelligence about equal to a dog's. Recon drones – the only type shown in this game – have no attack value, an ECM value of 8, and a move of 8.

3.03 *Heavy weapons.* These counters represent a rapid-fire missile cannon similar to the infantry hand weapons but larger. A heavy weapon may be carried by any man in armor. It may be fired by any man in an *undamaged* suit. Heavy weapons may be passed freely between units on a side, but captured weapons may not be used. See Section 6.08.

3.04 *Wreck and building counters.* The back of each unarmored infantry counter carries a picture of a wrecked vehicle or small building. These can be used in various scenarios to provide extra hard cover identical in its effects to the cover printed on the map. Place them so that the dot in the middle of the counter lies over a map point and the small arrow at the top of the counter points due north.

3.05 *Bunker counters.* These represent hardened defensive positions. All are identical on the front; one is marked "CP" on the back and represents the entrance to a command post. In a scenario where a CP is used, the attacker cannot tell the CP entrance from an ordinary bunker without entering it. Bunkers do not stand up above the surrounding terrain.

3.06 *Status chits.* These are half-size counters used by placing them on top of infantry units during play.

3.061 *Jump chits.* These are marked "JUMP +1" through "JUMP +8," with different values on front and back. Some are also marked "JUMP HIGH." They show when a man is in the air, and how high he is – see Section 4.06.

3.062 *Panic chits.* The back of each "JUMP HIGH" chit is printed "PANIC." Use to show "panicked" status - see Section 6.042.

## 4.00 MOVEMENT

The third number on each unit counter shows that unit's movement points (MP) – the number of points on the map it can normally move per turn. A unit expends one MP each time it moves one point in the air or on clear terrain. Movement points cannot be saved from turn to turn.

4.01 *Obstacles.* Hard and soft cover both act as obstacles to men on the ground. A man on the ground must expend two MP for each cover point he enters. A man that does not have 2 MP left that turn may not enter a cover point.

A man in the air must avoid flying so low that he collides with obstacles (see Section 4.06) but is not slowed by the obstacles he flies over.

4.02 *Stacking.* Any number of units may occupy a point at the same time. If enemy units are within range, though, it is unwise to have many units on the same point as they may be hit by "spillover fire" – see Section 6.09.

4.03 *Moving through other units.* Any unit may move through a point occupied by any other unit(s), either friendly or enemy. In practice, a unit is unlikely to have the chance to enter or move through an enemy-occupied point.

4.04 *Leaving the map.* It costs 1 MP to leave the map from any clear point on the map-edge, and 2 MP to leave the map from any cover point on the map-edge. It costs 1 MP to leave the map *in the air* from any point. A unit which leaves the map may not re-enter. Some of the scenarios permit (or even require) units to leave the map for various reasons.

4.05 *Regular (ground) movement.* A unit is assumed to be on the ground at all times unless there is a JUMP chit on it.

4.06 *Jump (air) movement.* Battlesuits have a limited flight ("jump") capability, which does not increase their net speed but does allow them to cross obstacles. It is also useful in tactical situations where there is a need to gain height in order to get a line of sight on an enemy. However, a man in the air is highly visible, and makes a good target. Note that only suited men may jump; unarmored men may not jump!

A unit may either jump or land, but not both, during one turn. Thus, a player moving a man on the ground may declare that he is jumping, place a JUMP chit on him, and continue the move. Likewise, a player moving a man in the air may declare that he is landing, remove the JUMP chit, and continue the move. No unit may jump and land in the same turn.

The height of a jump is shown by the JUMP chit used. If the chit reads "JUMP +1," for instance, his feet are one level (2 meters) above the terrain at that point. If a unit is in the air over a bare-ground point at Level 4, and has a "JUMP +6" chit on it, that unit is at Level 10 for purposes of figuring LOS.

All movement is "terrain following." A "JUMP +1" chit means the unit is one level above the top of the terrain; a "JUMP +2" chit means it is two levels above it, and so on. No unit may be considered "in the air" when it is closer than 2 meters to the ground or to the top of the cover at that point. In other words, a man may not fly through the trees! Example: Above Level 1 terrain, the lowest legal height would be Level 2 over clear terrain, Level 4 over hard cover, and Level 5 over soft cover. In each case, this height would be shown by a "JUMP +1" chit.

To find the true height of a man in the air, add the height of (a) the base terrain, (b) the cover (2 levels for hard cover, 3 for soft) and (c) his jump chit.

A unit may jump to any height. However, it is rarely advisable to jump more than 8 levels above the ground. In a case where this must be shown, use more than one jump chit. Note that the LOS Table goes only to Level 14. Players jumping their units higher than this will have to draw up their own expanded table.

4.061 *"JUMP HIGH" chits.* A player may sometimes want to position a unit high enough so that it can get a line of sight on *any* unit except those concealed deep within cover. To show this, use a "JUMP HIGH" chit. The disadvantage here is, of course, that all enemy units can get LOS on a unit this high.

4.062 *MP costs for jumping and landing.* It costs one movement point to jump – either to the same point in the air or to an adjacent point in the air. This is true regardless of the terrain (hard cover, soft cover, or clear) the unit jumps from.

There is no extra MP cost for landing on clear terrain or on top of a bunker or hard cover. It costs one extra MP to land *within* soft cover, hard cover, or a bunker.

4.063 *Changing levels during a jump.* Upon jumping, a man may go to any height at no additional MP cost. Similarly, a unit moving from one point to another in the air may change height freely as it moves – just change jump chits. Note that if a unit in the air moves over cover from bare ground, or vice versa, its *true* height will change to follow the terrain unless a new jump chit is used.

4.064 *Changing levels at the same point.* A unit may change levels during its turn without otherwise moving – just change the jump chit to indicate this. Each change in level (regardless of its magnitude) costs one MP. Example: a man in the air at Level 4, without changing horizontal position, pops up several levels (costing one movement point), fires, and drops back down (costing a second movement point).

Note that "diagonal" movement in the air is no more difficult than straight horizontal or vertical movement. If a man is at point A-3 at Level 8, it costs one movement point whether he goes to any adjacent point at Level 8, any adjacent point at some other level, or any other level at point A-3.

4.07 *Taking damage before movement.* Enemy reaction fire may shock or damage a unit before it moves during its turn (this will only happen if that unit fires before moving – see Section 5.00). If this happens, the unit hit may not move at all that turn, except to land if it was in the air, and may not fire again that turn.

4.08 *Taking damage during movement.* Enemy reaction fire may also shock or damage a unit after it starts to move but before it completes its movement. When this happens, the unit may move one more point (if it has any MP left, using its MP value after damage) but no further, on that turn. If it

is hit in the air, it may land. If it is hit on the ground, it may not jump. If it has not yet fired that turn, it may not fire.

## 5.00 TURN SEQUENCING

BATTLESUIT is played in alternating turns. During his own turn, a player may move each of his units up to the limit of its movement and/or fire with it. Units which are "in shock" or "panicked" may not be entirely under the owning player's control. During the course of each turn, the opponent can take "reaction fire" once with each of his own men.

The sequence of play for each turn is:

1. Check morale for each man in shock.
2. Move and/or fire with each "shaken" man.
3. Check morale for each man in panic.
4. Move and/or fire with panicked men, if necessary.
5. Move and/or fire with all other men, one at a time. (Player B will have been taking reaction fire throughout Player A's move.)

Player A's turn is over when all his men (or as many as he wants to use) have moved and/or fired. It is now Player B's move. Player B goes through the same five phases, and Player A may take reaction fire during Player B's move.

5.01 *Movement point counting and reaction fire.* Each time a player moves a unit, he must count the points moved out loud, one point at a time, hesitating about a second between each movement "One . . . two . . . three . . ." and so on. When entering a cover point, he skips a number: "One . . . two . . . four" to show that two movement points were used. When changing levels during a jump, he counts "One . . . two and change to +3 . . . three and change to +2" and so on.

Each unit may stop once, at any time during its move, and fire. The player might, for instance, count "One . . . two . . . fire." The results of the attack would then be figured – see Section 6.00. If the unit had any movement left, it could then move further, up to the limit of its movement points.

The act of firing may occur at any time during a unit's move – before, during, or after it changes position. Firing does NOT cost any MPs and does NOT end the unit's move.

No man ever has to move and/or fire at any time (exception: shock and panic. See Section 6.042). A man may fire without moving, move without firing, or take no action at all.

Once a unit has finished moving and/or firing, the facing on the counter should be changed to show that it has acted. Once a player has acted with one unit and gone on to another, he may not come back to the first unit to change or add to its move. If a player moves a unit and does not fire with it at that time, it may not fire that turn. Each unit must finish its attack and/or movement before the next one moves and/or fires.

5.02 *Reaction fire.* The reason that each player must slowly count his moves out loud is the enemy's ability to take "reaction fire." As Player A moves a unit across the map, he counts each point. At any time during that unit's movement, Player B may say "Stop!" The moving counter then *stops where it is at that moment*, and receives opportunity fire. Player B must immediately designate which of his men is firing; he may not stop to calculate ranges and determine when or where it is advantageous to fire. When a player calls for reaction fire, one of his units MUST fire then.

The results of a reaction attack are calculated immediately. If it proves that the firing unit was out of effective range or had no LOS, *the attack occurs anyway* – but it may be ineffectual. Since each friendly unit may take reaction fire only once during the enemy turn, it is vital not to waste its chance.

After the results of a reaction attack are applied, Player B may take reaction fire with another unit. If he chooses not to fire again, the moving unit continues. Player B may attack it again (with another unit) later in its move. Theoretically, every one of B's units could take its reaction fire on the same enemy.

Therefore, to use reaction fire, a player must exercise quick good judgment. Once an enemy unit leaves a point, you may not force him to go back to it and take reaction fire there; you must shoot at him where he is. Thus, the battlefield reflexes of the infantrymen are determined by the judgment and reactions of the player who controls them.

A unit may not be attacked by reaction fire unless (a) it has already moved or fired that turn, or (b) it begins the turn in the air. If a unit begins the turn in the air, the enemy can take reaction fire on it before it does anything at all. However, a unit which jumps straight up in the air may attack before any enemy reaction fire can take place; it counts "Jump and fire . . . two . . . three . . . " and so on.

5.021 *Attacking during movement.* When Player A wishes a unit to attack, he includes it in the count: "One . . . two . . . fire." He must pause between the movement and the attack. Thus, a man who attacks during movement may be hit by reaction fire before his own attack occurs (see Section 4.08).

5.022 *Attacking before movement.* If a man begins the turn on the ground, he can (a) fire before he moves at all, or (b) jump straight up in the air and fire before moving to another point. In either case, his attack comes before any enemy reaction fire can be taken against him.

If a man begins the turn in the air, B may choose to direct reaction fire against him as soon as A's turn begins. However, if A points at the unit in the air and says "Fire" before B directs fire against it, then A's unit attacks (from the point it occupies at that moment) before B may take any reaction fire.

5.023 *End-of-turn reaction fire.* Each of B's units may take reaction fire once during A's turn, and vice versa. If any of B's units have not taken their reaction fire by the time A announces he is through with his turn, B may use their reaction fire then. However, it may only be directed at units which are in the air, or which moved or fired during the just-completed turn. When B has taken reaction fire with all his units, then A's turn is over and B's turn begins.

5.03 *Notes on the "count."* A player may NOT count quickly in an attempt to confuse his opponent or avoid reaction fire. About a second between counts is fair. However, taking longer between counts is legal, and may sometimes "psych out" an opponent.

A player must pause between (a) one point and the next, and (b) entering a new point and firing from it. He does not have to pause between jumping straight up and firing, or between jumping and moving to a new point. However, if he jumps to a *different* point (not just straight up) he must pause before firing. A player does not have to pause before landing; he may count " . . . four . . . five and land." If the enemy did not fire on him until after "five," the defender is on the ground when it is attacked – not still in the air.

## 6.00 COMBAT

6.01 *Sequencing.* Each unit can attack once per turn (or twice, if it does not move during that turn – see Section 6.06 below). Some shocked and panicked units may not be able to attack, or may not attack as the player would wish (Section 6.042). A unit may attack either during its move or immediately before or after it moves. Each unit may also make one "reaction attack" during the opponent's move.

6.02 *Attack strength.* The first number on a unit counter is its basic attack strength. This represents both the power and the accuracy of that unit's weapon. A unit with a printed attack strength of "0" *cannot attack at all*, even if it might be eligible for modifiers that would aid it. It has no weapon!

6.03 *ECM value.* The second number on a unit counter is its electronic countermeasure (ECM) value – the strength of the electronic "spoofing" devices that protect it, adjusted for any other factors that make it an easy or hard target.

6.04 *Attacks.* Units may not combine their attack strength; each unit attacks individually. Only one unit (the "defender") may be attacked at a time, although "spillover fire" onto another unit at the same point is possible – see Section 6.09. Once an attack is announced, it is resolved as follows:

(a) Take the basic attack strength on the attacking counter.

(b) Add any appropriate bonuses, as follows:

+3 if the defender is being specifically targeted (Section 6.05) by either the attacking unit or another unit.

+1 if the defender is below the attacking unit.

(c) Subtract any appropriate penalties, as follows:

-1 through -8 for the ECM value of the defender.

-2 if the attack is a reaction-fire attack.
-1 if the defender is above the attacker and on the ground. *There is no penalty for firing at a higher defender if that defending unit is in the air!*
-7 if the defender is in a bunker.
-5 if the defender is in hard cover.
-3 if the defender is in soft cover.
-2 if the attacker is "shaken" after a morale check.
-5 if there is no line of sight (LOS) to the defender, OR if this is a "spillover" attack (Section 6.08). Note that if there is no LOS, the -1 penalty or +1 bonus for relative height will not apply.
-1 if the defender is 11 to 20 points away, -2 if it is 21 to 30 points away, -3 if it is 31 to 40 points away, etc.

Example: A man in a standard suit is firing at a defender in a ranger suit. The attacker is on Level 5; the target is at Level 6. The defender is 11 points away, in soft cover. A friendly unit is targeting the ranger. The attack strength is computed as follows: 8 (basic attack strength for standard suit) plus 3 (for targeting) minus 1 (firing uphill) minus 5 (ECM value of ranger suit) minus 3 (soft cover) minus 1 (the distance is between 11 and 20). The final result is an attack strength of 1.

6.041 *Resolving attacks on the CRT.* The attacker now rolls two dice and consults the CRT (combat results table) on the line corresponding to the adjusted attack strength. Results are applied immediately, before further movement or fire. Interpret the CRT results as follows:

X – defender destroyed. Remove the defender's counter.
S – defender shocked. Turn the defender's counter over to show the "shocked" side. Further behavior of the shocked unit will depend on its reactions to morale checks. Exceptions: An "S" result kills an unarmored man and does not affect a drone.
-1, -2, or -3 – defender damaged. Refer to the Damage Table to find out how much damage has been done and replace the defender's counter with the appropriate damaged-suit counter. Exceptions: Any damage result eliminates a drone or an unarmored man.
-1/S, -2/S, or -3/S – defender is both shocked and damaged. Replace the defender's counter with the appropriate damaged-suit counter, "shock" side up.
NE – the attack has no effect.

To use the Damage Table, cross-index the type of unit hit with the amount of damage done. Then replace the defending unit with the proper damaged-suit counter. Note that cumulative damage can destroy a suit.

6.042 *Shock, Panic, and Morale.* The reactions of a man to a hit or near-miss can be as important as the physical damage to his body or suit. Thus, shock requires a "morale check."

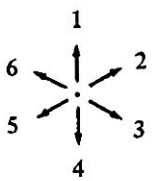
When the CRT indicates shock, the affected counter is turned over to display the "shocked" side. That unit may not fire until it recovers from the shock. It may not move again until it recovers, unless it was moving at the time it was hit. In that case, it may move one more point and/or land, if it has enough movement remaining after damage is taken. (This is an exception to the general rule that a unit may not land on the same turn that it jumps.)

At the beginning of a player's turn, he rolls one die to check morale for each shocked man. He may take them in any order. All shocked units must be checked for morale before any other units can move or fire. Possible results are:

0, 1 – Panic. Turn the counter right side up and place a PANIC chit on it. That unit will do nothing more until the panic resolution phase of this same turn.
2, 3 – Stunned. The man is still in shock, and can do nothing at all this turn, except land if he is in the air.
4 – Shaken. The man has recovered from shock (turn his counter over again), but he is still somewhat shaky. He must move and fire immediately, if he is to do either this turn. His movement value is normal, but his attack strength is reduced by 2 for this turn. Furthermore, he cannot target an enemy unit, or benefit from another unit targeting for him, on that turn.
5, 6 – Recovery. Turn the counter right side up. The man has recovered from shock and may move and/or fire normally this turn.

After all shocked units have been checked for morale and any "shaken" men have moved and/or fired, it is time to check morale on any panicked men – including those that panicked during the just-completed shock morale check. Roll one die for each, in any order. Possible results:

0, 1 – Paranoia. The man immediately fires at the closest unit (friendly or enemy). If two or more are equally close, he fires at the one he has the best chance to hit. He does not move that turn.
2 – Berserk. Roll two dice. The first determines whether the man moves "Jump High" (even) or on the ground (odd). The second determines the direction he moves, with a 1 being due north and other results going clockwise (see below). He moves as far as possible in this way. At the end of his movement, if he has not been shocked or killed by enemy reaction fire, he fires at the closest friendly or enemy unit, as above.




3 – Fright. The man moves directly for the closest hard or soft cover. If he is already in cover, he does not move. If more than one point of cover is equally close, the owning player may choose the one he heads for.
4 – Self-destruct. The man makes a fatal error with his suit controls. Remove the counter.
5 – Shock. The man freezes again. Remove the panic chit. He goes back to shock. He may land (on the same point) if he is in the air, but may do nothing else this turn.
6 – Recovery. Remove the panic chit and turn the counter right side up. The man may move and fight normally.

A "0" result can occur with optional rule 8.03, modifying morale rolls downward when a commander has been lost.

Panicked units, or units in shock, may never make reaction attacks, and cannot target for themselves or other units. They may be attacked normally by regular or reaction fire if they are otherwise eligible to be attacked.

A panicked unit, or one in shock, is not affected by any further "shock" result on the CRT.

6.05 *Targeting.* If a unit (man or drone) does not move *at all* during a turn, it may "target" one enemy unit to make that unit easier to hit. A unit may either be in the air or on the ground to target an enemy, but it must have a clear line of sight (see Section 6.07) to the targeted unit.

Targeting is not the same as attacking. It is also not the same as simply "seeing" an enemy; a soldier may be able to see several foes, but can only target one per turn. Targeting involves "painting" the enemy unit with a sighting laser and/or communicating its location by voice, to make it easier to hit.

6.051 *Targeting and firing.* A unit may attack the same enemy that it targets, receiving the +3 targeting bonus. It may not attack any other unit that turn. However, a unit does not have to attack an enemy that it targets. In some cases (i.e., when the targeting unit has little attack strength and the player wishes to avoid reaction fire) it is far better to target an enemy but not to attack it. The act of targeting, by itself, does not expose a unit to reaction fire.

A man may target even if his own attack is too weak to reach the unit being targeted. Even a suit with no attack strength left can target. Drones are designed for targeting.

6.052 *Effects of targeting.* When an enemy is targeted, the targeting unit may fire at it with a +3 bonus. In addition, any other unit may fire at that enemy with the same +3 bonus. There is no benefit from having two or more units target the same enemy. The effects of targeting last only for the turn in which the targeting takes place.

6.053 *Targeting during reaction fire prohibited.* No unit may target an enemy, either for itself or for another unit,

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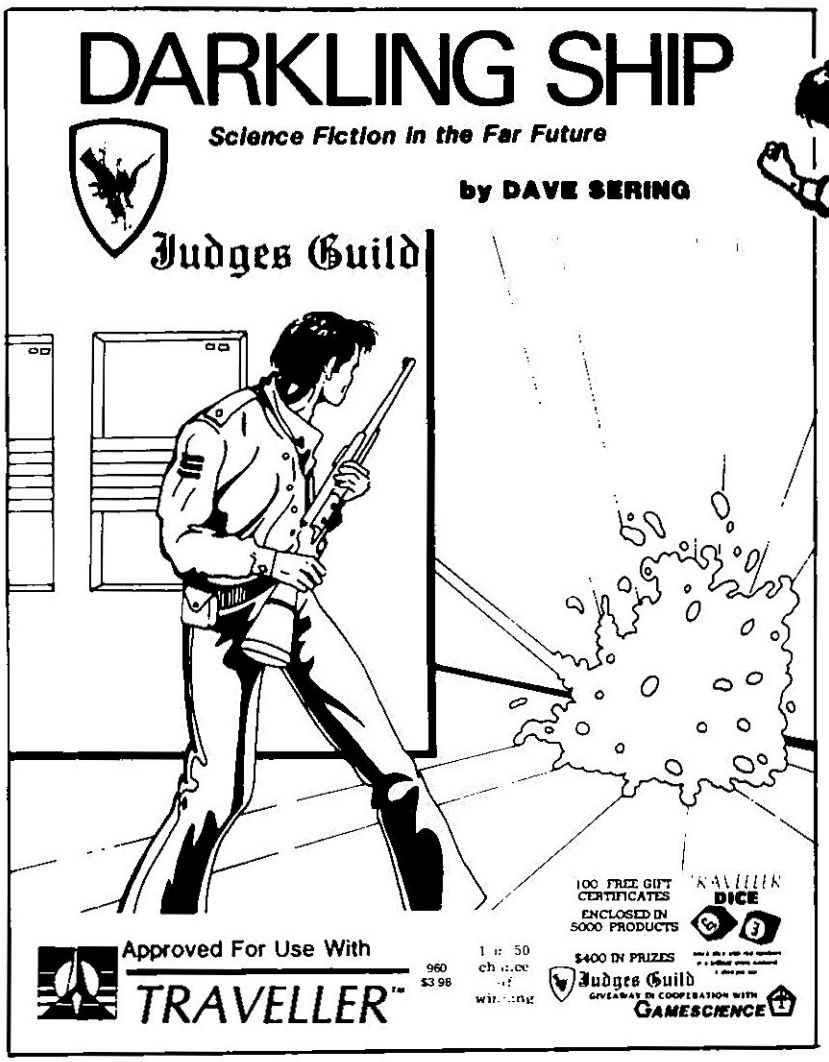

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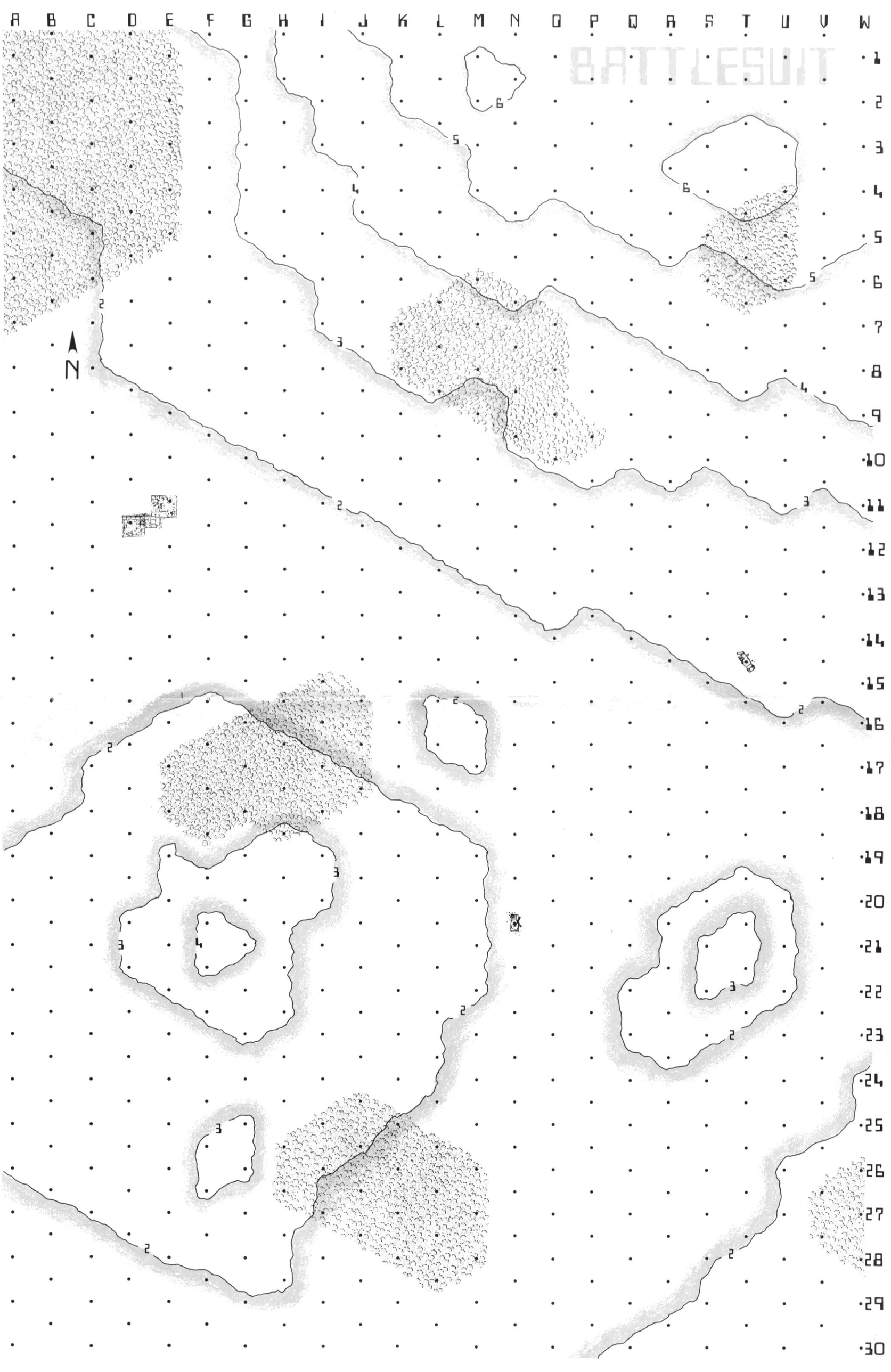
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
BATTLESUIT
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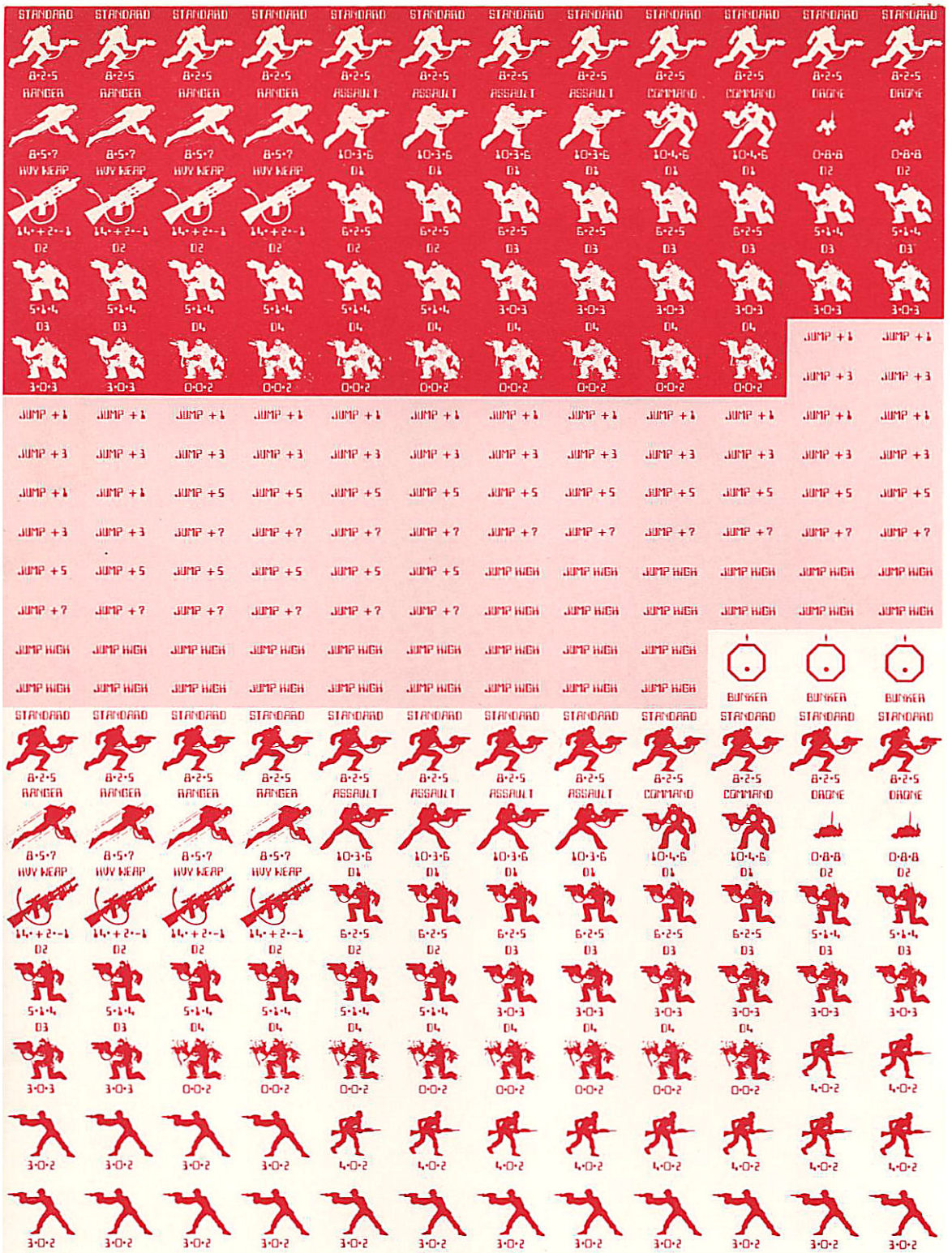
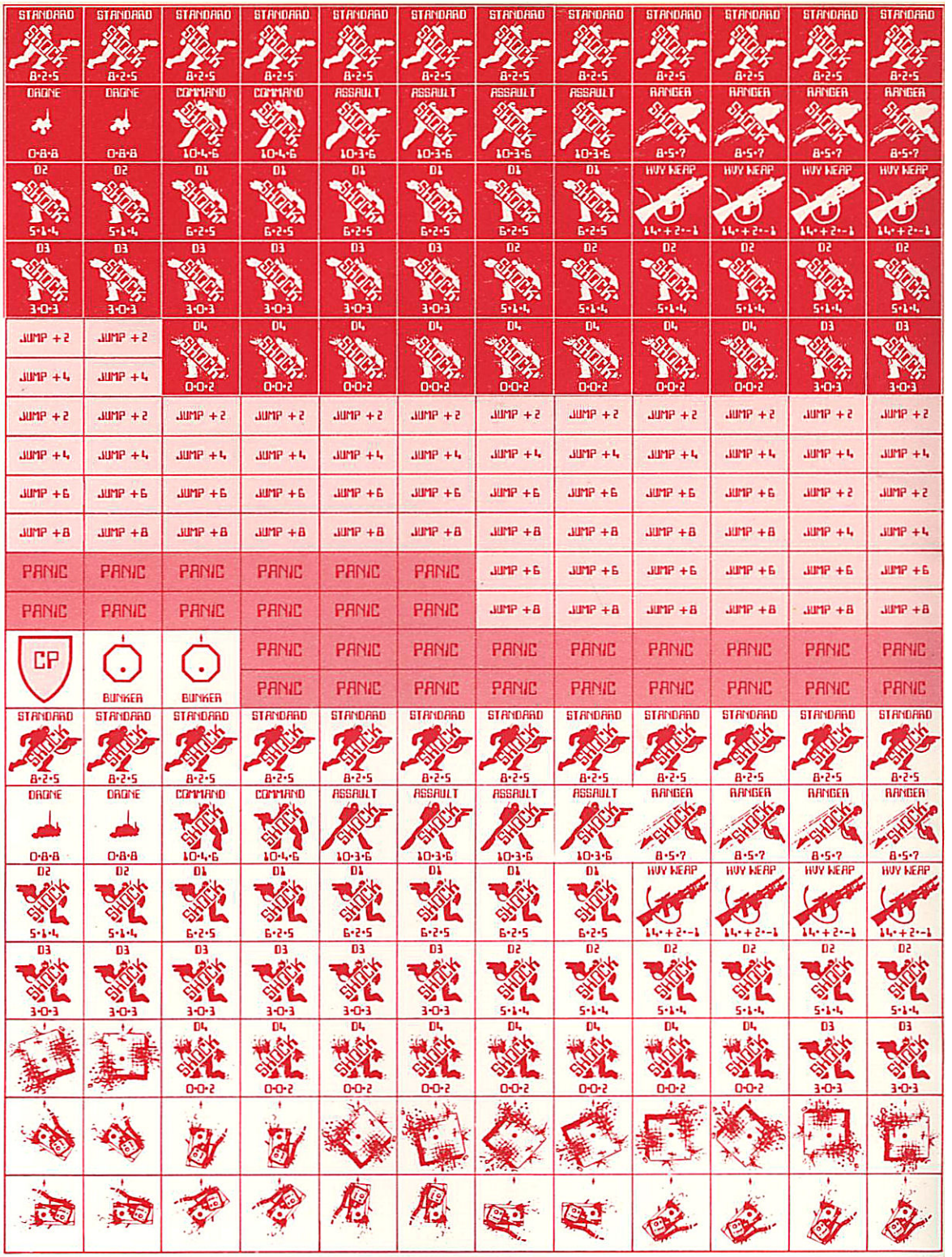

STANDARD
8·2·5
RANGER
8·5·?
HVY WEAP
14·+2·-1
D2
5·1·4
D3
3·0·3
JUMP +1
JUMP +3
JUMP +5
JUMP +?
JUMP HIGH
ASSAULT
10·3·6
D1
6·2·5
D3
4·0·2
COMMAND
10·4·6
DRONE
0·8·8
BUNKER


STANDARD
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DRONE
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COMMAND
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ASSAULT
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RANGER
8·5·?
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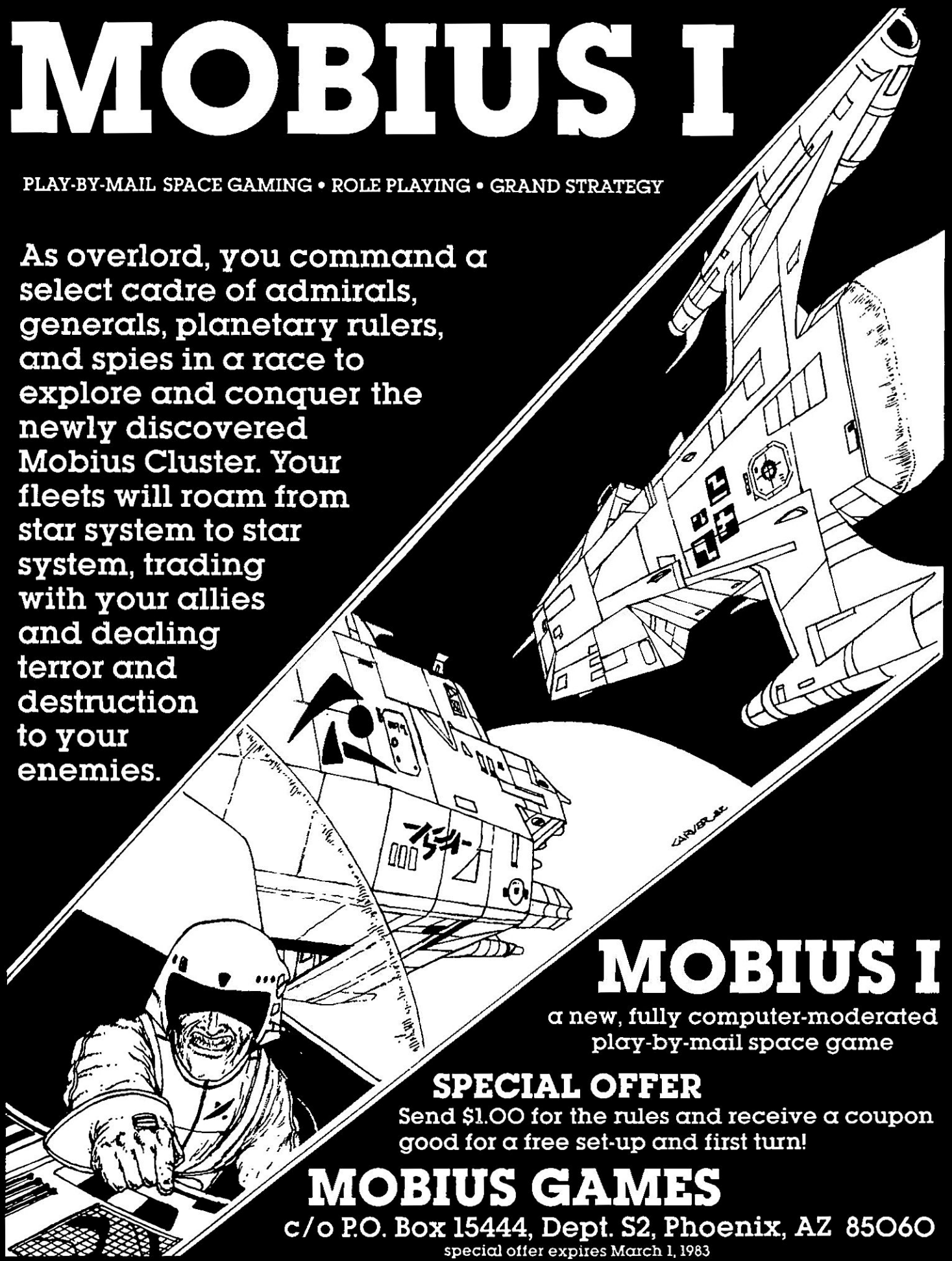

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during the enemy turn – i.e., during reaction fire. A player's units may only target during the player's own turn.

6.054 *Sequencing.* When a unit targets an enemy, the attacker must announce which unit is targeting and which defender is being targeted. If the targeting unit is to fire, it must do so immediately. Any other units firing at the targeted defender should then move and fire. This is not required, but it helps to keep track of which unit is targeting which enemy.

6.055 *Defense against targeting.* The only defense against being targeted is to use reaction fire to shock or damage the targeting unit. If the targeting unit is hit, it is no longer able to target for that turn. Any attacks that have already occurred are (of course) unaffected, but any further attacks against that defending unit will be without the targeting bonus, unless the defending unit can be targeted by another attacker.

6.056 *Indirect fire on a targeted unit.* A unit may make an indirect attack on an enemy unit targeted by another, friendly unit. The +3 bonus for targeting will not entirely cancel the -5 penalty for attacking without LOS, but it will help . . . this is the principle behind artillery spotting.

6.06 *Double attacks.* If a man does not move *or* target, he may fire twice during a turn. The two attacks may be either direct or indirect, and may be made against the same or different units. If either or both attacks are made against targeted defenders, they get the +3 bonus. Note that a man may never target for himself and fire twice!

When a man fires twice, the first attack is announced and resolved; then the second attack is announced and resolved.

A man may never attack twice during reaction fire – only during his own side's turn.

6.07 *Line of Sight.* An attacker *must* have a clear line of sight to a unit in order to target it. He may fire at an enemy without a clear LOS ("indirect fire"), but there is a -5 penalty.

In most cases, it will be obvious whether there is a clear LOS or not. LOS is not blocked by units; it can only be blocked by intervening terrain or cover. Therefore, a man "behind" woods, a wrecked vehicle, or the crest of a hill may be safe from direct fire unless the enemy is in the air. If a man is well within cover (i.e., in the middle of woods) no enemy may ever have a LOS on him unless the two units are at the same or adjacent points. When a unit is on the edge of cover (see Section 6.072), it has the defensive advantage of the cover, but there may still be a LOS out of the cover, allowing it to make (and undergo) direct attacks.

Note that LOS has both horizontal and vertical components. When there is doubt as to whether a clear LOS can be traced, use the LOS Table (Section 9.04). To use this table, find the following three points on it, marking them lightly with a pencil if necessary:

POINT A is the attacker's location. This is always set at 0 on the horizontal axis. The vertical level of Point A is set one level above the attacker's true level. This is because levels are only 2 meters apart – and an infantryman is about 2 meters tall. Example: If the attacker is standing (or flying) at Level 4, Point A is at (0,5). If he is at Level 10, Point A is at (0,11). If the attacker is in a bunker, do *not* add one to his level.

POINT B is the location of the defender. Its location on the horizontal axis is the distance between the attacking and the defending units. Its vertical height is also one level above the defender's true level. Example: If the defender is 13 points away from the attacker, at Level 3, Point B is at (13,4). If the defender is in a bunker, do *not* add one to his level.

POINT X is the object (hilltop, cover, etc.) that the players suspect may block LOS. Its horizontal location on the chart is equal to its distance from the *attacker.* Its vertical location is equal to its actual height (if it is in clear terrain), its actual height plus 2 (if it is a hard-cover point) or its actual height plus 3 (if it is a soft-cover point). Thus, if Point X was a hilltop 5 points from the attacker at Level 3, it would be located at (5,3) if clear, (5,5) if hard cover, or (5,6) if wooded.

Now draw a line between Point A and Point B (or place a straightedge between them to avoid marking the table). If Point X is on or over that line, the LOS is not clear (again, the defender gets the benefit of the doubt). If Point X is below the line, it does not block LOS. Repeat the process for any other points that are suspected of blocking LOS.

This method is known as "analog" determination. Though it is somewhat slow, it can give an accurate determination for any three points on the game map, without involving higher math. Fortunately, questionable LOS situations do not arise every turn, and with experience players will learn (as do battlefield commanders) to judge where lines of fire will appear by studying the topographical map itself.

6.071 *Borderline cases.* Only rarely will a straight line between attacker and defender cross exactly over a point. Far oftener, the line will enter cover, or cross a contour line, between points. When this happens, take the point closest to the spot at which the line enters the cover or crosses the contour line and use this to determine Point X. If two points are equally close, the defender may check both points.

In a case where the line of fire just grazes a contour line, or barely touches the depiction of soft or hard cover, it is still deemed to have gone "over the hill" or "through the cover" – in other words, questionable situations are resolved against the attacker.

6.072 *Firing into and out of cover.* If the LOS from an attacker in cover, or to a defender in cover, passes through ½" or less of that cover, the cover does not block LOS (though it still causes the -3, -5, or -7 penalty to the attacker if the defender is the one in cover). Thus, an attacker at point E-1, on the edge of the woods, could fire at a target at point J-1 without any penalty; J-1 is not in cover, and there is a LOS. A unit at J-1 could fire back at E-1 as well; his LOS is considered clear because it passes through ½" or less of woods. However, the -3 penalty for firing into soft cover still applies.

Note, though, that a unit at E-1 would not have LOS to (for instance) D-7 or E-7; he would be firing through more than ½" of woods.

In any questionable case, lay a straightedge between the two points and measure how much cover lies on the LOS. More than ½" means the fire will have to be indirect. A unit taking cover in a wrecked vehicle will have clear LOS in any direction while being protected by hard cover; on the other hand, units around him have a clear LOS to him, too.

6.08 *Heavy weapon procedure.* The heavy weapon counter (Section 3.03) represents a squad-carried weapon analogous in mission to today's M-60 light machine gun. It can be carried by (i.e., stacked with) any armored infantryman; it *adds* 2 to his ECM value, and *subtracts* 1 from his MP each turn.

Each heavy weapon can be fired once per turn (twice if the user does not move or target). It may be used by any man in an *undamaged* suit. Its attack strength of 14 *substitutes* for his own attack strength. He cannot fire both his own weapon and the heavy weapon on the same turn. He is assumed to carry his personal weapon at his side while using the heavy weapon.

If a man is eliminated by an "X" on the CRT (or self-destructs) while carrying a heavy weapon, the weapon is also destroyed. If a man is hit for a "damaged" result while carrying a heavy weapon, roll one die. On a result of 1, the weapon is destroyed and the man takes normal damage. On a 2 or 3, the weapon is destroyed but the man takes no damage (though if the CRT showed a "shock" result, that still takes effect). On a 4, 5, or 6, the man takes normal damage but the weapon is unaffected and may be picked up and used by another man. Neither side may use a heavy weapon belonging to the enemy.

A heavy weapon counter cannot be "dropped" (left alone) in the air. It can be dropped on the ground and picked up later by any armored man. A dropped heavy weapon may be attacked separately, using its own ECM value of 2; an "S" result does not affect it, but any damage destroys it.

6.09 *Spillover fire.* If two or more units are on the same point and one is attacked, the other(s) automatically undergo "spillover fire" from the same attack. Compute as for any other attack, but (a) subtract 5 from attack strength if there was a LOS, and (b) no targeting bonus is possible. If there was *no* LOS, *do not* subtract another -5 for spillover fire.

Spillover fire represents the chance of *accidentally* hitting a unit other than the one that was fired on.

### 7.00 ENDING THE GAME

The game is over when one player has fulfilled the victory conditions for the scenario being played. All scenarios are "balanced," in that each player has an equal chance to win. Note, though, that winning the game may represent a good performance in a tactically impossible situation – i.e., in scenario 9.03 the defender can win by delaying the attacker for long enough, even if all his men are killed.

### 8.00 OPTIONAL RULES

These rules may be used to "handicap" a game, to add more tactical complexity, or to design new scenarios. Some of the existing scenarios will call for use of an optional rule.

8.01 *Improved detection.* One side has gained a temporary advantage in detection gadgetry. That side receives a +2 bonus on each attack it makes, regardless of other factors.

8.02 *Suit integrity.* The battlefield is contaminated with chemical or biological agents which will quickly kill an unprotected man. Any breach in a suit will doom its wearer.

When a unit goes from "standard" to "d2," or from any other suit type to "d1," roll one die. On a 1 or 2, that suit was breached and the unit is eliminated immediately.

When a d1 suit goes to d2, or when any suit goes to d3 or d4, it is automatically breached and is eliminated immediately.

To use this rule as a handicap, apply it to only one side; the other side may be assumed to have initiated the chemical or biological attack and to have immunized its troops.

8.03 *Loss of command control.* Under some battlefield conditions, men who lose their leader may also temporarily lose most or all of their ability to communicate with one another. This affects morale badly. Therefore, at any time a side's commander (i.e., the command-suit unit) is in shock or panic, subtract 1 from all shock and panic morale rolls made by other units on that side. If the commander is killed, the penalty becomes permanent.

If a player has two or more command suits, one must be designated (secretly) as commander. The commander may pass command to another command-suit wearer at the beginning of any turn when neither of them is in shock or panic. If this is done, nothing that happens to the ex-commander will affect morale. If a commander is killed but his side has another command suit, that unit may be designated the new commander two turns after the old commander's death – that is, his side undergoes the morale penalty for only two turns.

### 9.00 SCENARIOS

Each scenario represents a different battlefield situation. When a force begins the game set up on the map, any unit may be in the air at any height, or on the ground. When a force enters from off the map, any unit may enter in the air at any height, or on the ground: in either case, MP expenditure starts with the first point entered. When one force is on the map and the other force enters, the force on the map can take reaction fire during the entering player's first move.

In 9.04 and any other scenario involving value of units destroyed, a standard suit and a heavy weapon each count 1; a drone, ranger, or assault suit counts 2; a command suit counts 4. An unarmored man counts 1/5. A suit which is damaged, but survives the battle, can be repaired; count it as intact.

9.01 *Training.* This is a learning scenario; it represents a Paneuropean training exercise, using simulated weapons that disable a man's suit harmlessly when he is "hit."

Setup: Each team starts with 4 standard suits, one assault suit, one ranger suit, and one heavy weapon. Team A (red) moves first, entering from the south end of the map. Team A will not fire, as they have no targets. Team B (white) then enters from the north end of the map.

Victory conditions: Eliminate the opposing side.

9.02 *Delaying Action.* A Combine platoon is advancing on a Paneuropean command post less than two kilometers away. The closest force that can be interposed is a single reinforced squad – not enough to stop the attackers.

Setup: The Paneuropean force (white) is composed of four standard suits, two assault suits, and one ranger suit; they have two heavy weapons and two drones. They may set up anywhere on or north of the line between A-6 and W-17, The Combine force (red) is composed of 12 standard suits, two assault suits, and a command suit, plus three heavy weapons. This force moves first, entering anywhere on or between points E-30 and Q-30 at the south end of the map.

Victory conditions: The Combine player must exit at least 6 men, condition d2 or better, from the north end of the map. The speed with which this occurs determines the victor.

Within Combine's first 8 turns . . . . . decisive Combine victory
9 to 11 turns . . . . . marginal Combine victory
12 to 14 turns. . . . . draw
15 to 17 turns. . . . . marginal Paneuropean victory
Over 17 turns . . . . . decisive Paneuropean victory

9.03 *The Heroes at CP Alpha.* The delaying action succeeded . . . almost. Five Combine infantrymen made it past the Paneuropean defenders. The "cavalry" – a force of GEVs – is only minutes away. But there is nothing left between the attackers and their target except the post's own personnel – unarmored and carrying only hand weapons.

Setup: The Paneuropean player sets up the three bunkers (one of which is really the CP) within 5 points of point U-2. He gets 25 unarmored infantry (ten 4-0-2 and fifteen 3-0-2), which may be set up anywhere within 15 points of point U-2.

The Combine player gets two standard suits, one d1, one command suit, and one assault suit. This force moves first, entering anywhere on the south edge, or on the west edge at row 27 or south.

Special rules: The Combine player does not know which bunker is the CP. To destroy a CP or bunker, an armored man (even one with no attack strength left) need only enter its point. He does not need to enter the bunker itself; he can destroy it by tossing in a small atomic charge. This wrecks the bunker and kills any occupants, but does not affect the attacking battlesuit. This counts as that man's attack for the turn.

Victory conditions: To win, the Combine attackers must destroy the CP on or before their 9th turn. If they can do so, they will achieve their objective (and disrupt enemy communications enough to give themselves a chance to escape). If they have not destroyed the CP by the end of the 9th turn, the avenging GEVs will certainly get them on the (imaginary) tenth turn, so this is an all-or-nothing situation.

9.04 *Scrap Iron Hill.* This scenario represents a full-scale battle between a Paneuropean platoon and a Combine reinforced platoon.

Setup: The Paneuropean player sets up anywhere on or south of row 17, with 12 standard suits, 3 rangers, 2 assault suits, and one command suit, plus 3 heavy weapons and 2 drones. The Combine player moves first, entering from the north end of the map with no more than 10 of his units. He may bring in the balance of his units on the second turn. The Combine player has 12 standard suits, 4 assault suits, one ranger, one command suit, and 4 heavy weapons, plus 2 drones. Each side also gets 3 hard-cover counters which may be placed anywhere on the map.

Special rules: It is suggested that optional rule 8.03 (command control) be used. Paneuropean forces may not exit the map except from the south end; Combine players may not exit the map except at the north end.

Victory conditions: The side holding the map at the end of the game is the winner. If his losses were less than half of enemy losses, the victory is a decisive one – therefore, a player who is losing may wish to break off and leave the map.

*As with Ogre and G.E.V., players can work out their own scenarios. It is especially suggested that players draw up new maps and explore their tactical possibilities; a map that neither player has studied in advance will lead to an interesting game!* **The Space Gamer** *will be interested in readers' comments, suggestions on strategy, and new scenarios.*

# COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

| *Attack Strength* | *Die Roll* 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | -1 | -1 | -1/S | -1/S | -2/S | -2/S | -3/S | X | X | X | X |
| 9 | S | -1 | -1 | -1/S | -1/S | -2/S | -2/S | -3/S | X | X | X |
| 8 | S | S | -1 | -1 | -1/S | -1/S | -2/S | -2/S | -3/S | X | X |
| 7 | S | S | S | -1 | -1 | -1/S | -1/S | -2/S | -2/S | -3/S | X |
| 6 | NE | S | S | S | -1 | -1 | -1/S | -1/S | -2/S | -3/S | X |
| 5 | NE | NE | NE | S | S | -1 | -1 | -1/S | -2/S | -3/S | X |
| 4 | NE | NE | NE | NE | S | S | -1 | -1/S | -2/S | -3/S | X |
| 3 | NE | NE | NE | NE | NE | S | S | -1 | -1/S | -2/S | X |
| 2 | NE | NE | NE | NE | NE | NE | S | -1 | -1/S | -1/S | X |
| 1 | NE | NE | NE | NE | NE | NE | NE | S | S | -1/S | -3/S |
| 0 | NE | NE | NE | NE | NE | NE | NE | NE | S | -1/S | -2/S |

An attack strength of over 10 (after modifiers) is treated as 10. An attack strength of less than zero (after modifiers) has no effect. A unit with a printed attack strength of 0 cannot attack at all.

A "NE" indicates that the defender is not affected. A "S" indicates that the defender is in shock. A "-1", "-2", or "-3" indicates that the defender takes that amount of damage – see the Damage Table. An "X" indicates that the defender is eliminated. See Section 6.041.

# DAMAGE TABLE

| *Unit Type* | *Damage Taken* -1 | -2 | -3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Standard (8-2-5) | d2 | d3 | d4 |
| Ranger (8-5-7) | d1 | d2 | d3 |
| Assault (10-3-6) | d1 | d2 | d3 |
| Command (10-4-6) | d1 | d2 | d3 |
| d1 (6-2-5) | d2 | d3 | d4 |
| d2 (5-1-4) | d3 | d4 | X |
| d3 (3-0-3) | d4 | X | X |
| d4 (0-0-2) | X | X | X |
| Drone (0-8-8) | X | X | X |
| Unarmored man (4-0-2 or 3-0-2) | X | X | X |

This table shows the result of each degree of damage for each unit. Example: A standard suit that takes "-2" damage becomes a d3 suit. A d1 suit that takes "-3" damage becomes a d4 suit. An "X" indicates that the unit is destroyed.

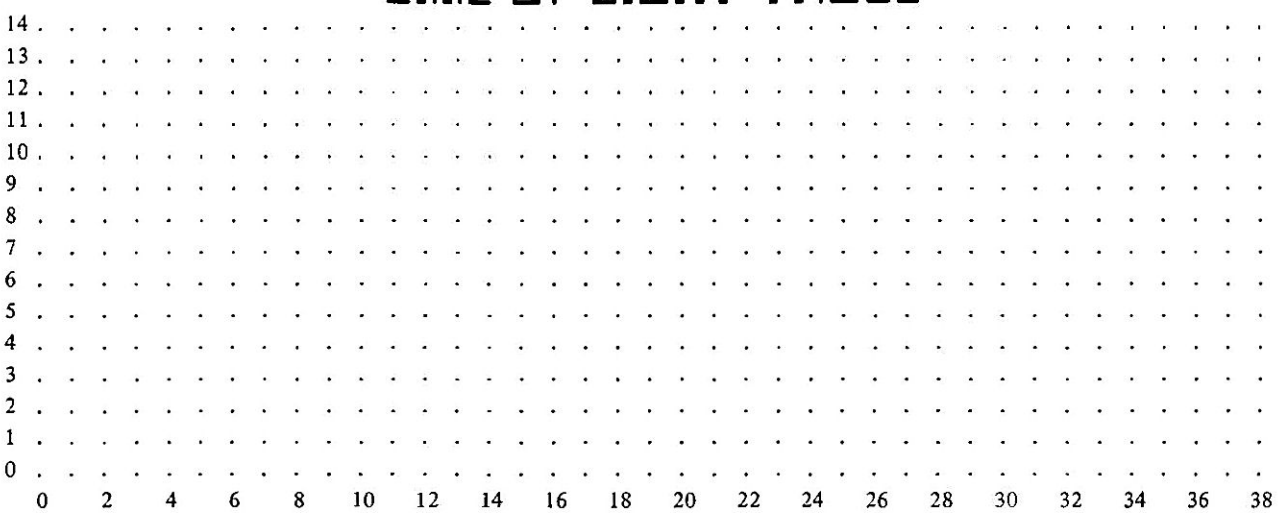
# TERRAIN EFFECTS

| *Type of Terrain* | *Cost to Enter on Ground* | *Attack Mod.* | *Height* | *Cost to Land in* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clear | 1 MP | 0 | 0 | 1 MP |
| Soft cover | 2 MP | -3 | +3 | 2 MP |
| Hard cover | 2 MP | -5 | +2 | 2 MP |
| Bunker | 2 MP | -7 | 0 | 2 MP |

# ATTACK STRENGTH MODIFICATIONS

(a) Take the basic attack strength on the attacking counter.
(b) Add any appropriate bonuses, as follows:
+3 if the defender is being specifically targeted (section 6.05) by either the attacking unit or another unit.
+1 if the defender is below the attacking unit.
(c) Subtract any appropriate penalties, as follows:
-1 through -8 for the ECM value of the defender.
-2 if the attack is a reaction-fire attack.
-1 if the defender is above the attacker and on the ground. *There is no penalty for firing at a higher defender if that defending unit is in the air!*
-7 if the defender is in a bunker.
-5 if the defender is in hard cover.
-3 if the defender is in soft cover.
-2 if the attacker is "shaken" after a morale check
-5 if there is no line of sight (LOS) to the defender, OR if this is a "spillover" attack (Section 6.08). Note that if there is no LOS, the -1 penalty or +1 bonus for relative height will not apply.
-1 if the defender is 11 to 20 points away, -2 if it is 21 to 30 points away, -3 if it is 31 to 40 points away, etc.

# LINE OF SIGHT TABLE



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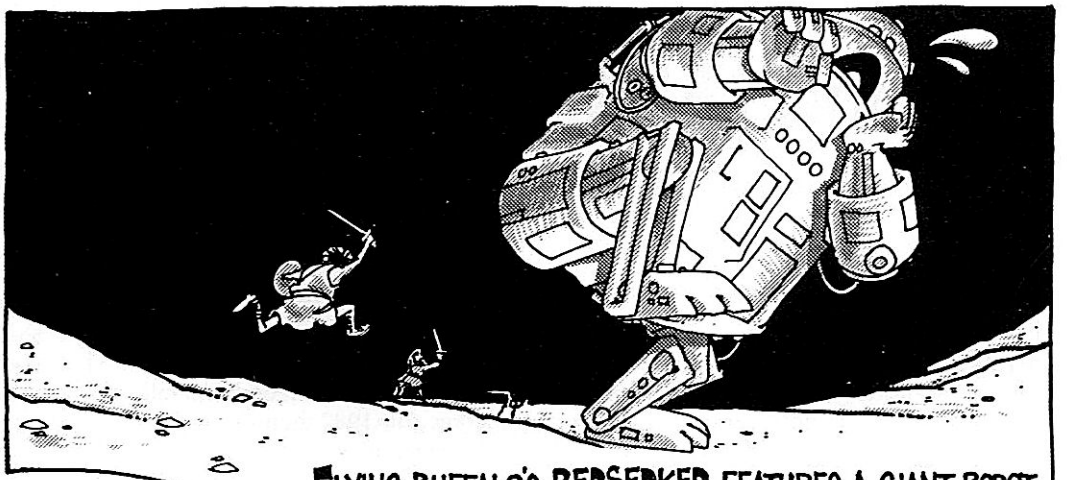
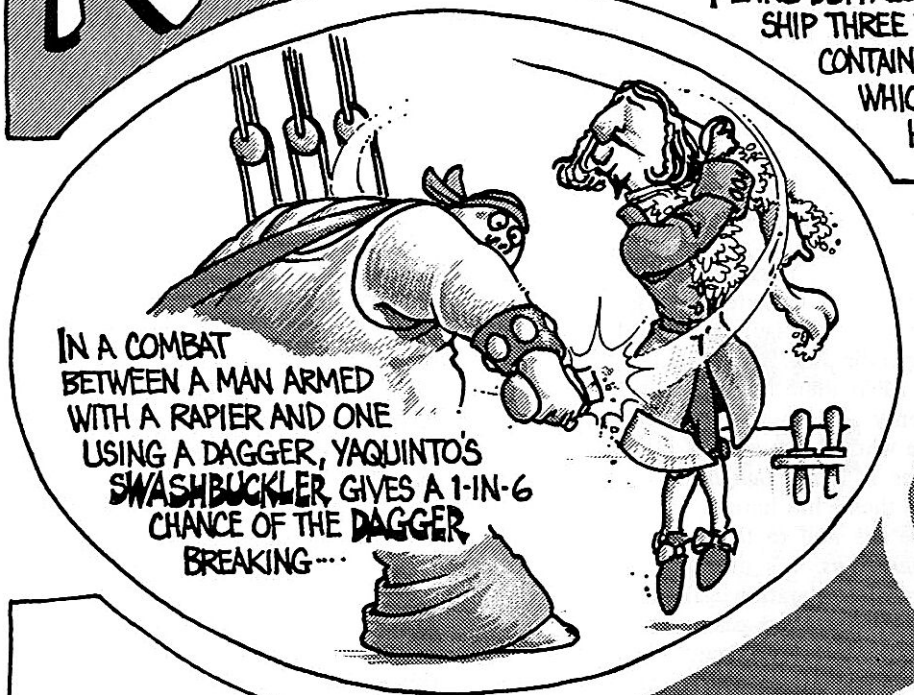
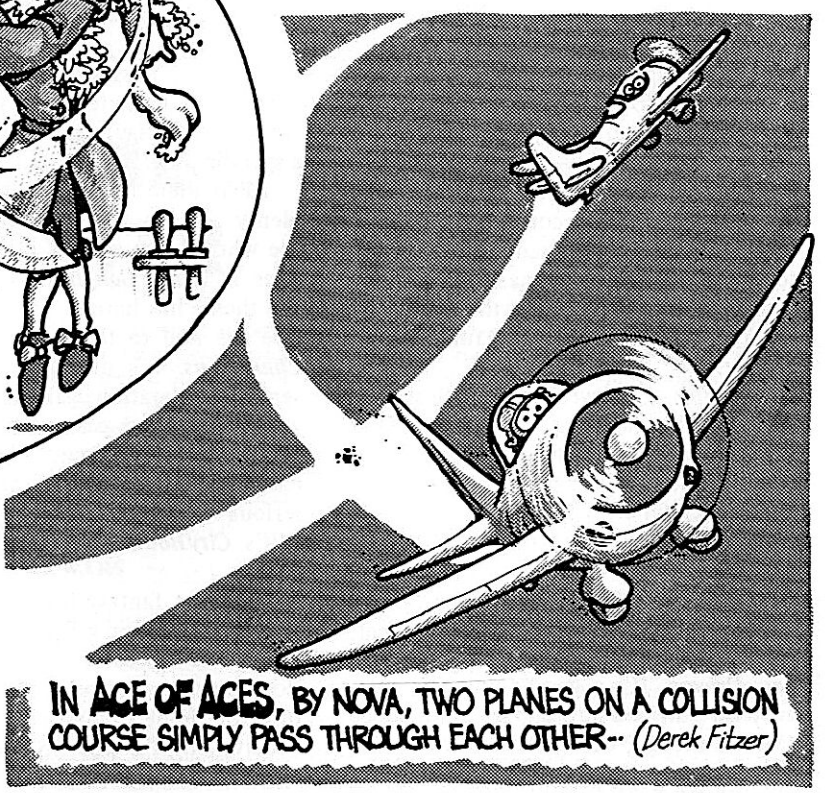
# MURPHY'S RULES!



FLYING BUFFALO'S **BERSERKER** FEATURES A GIANT ROBOT SHIP THREE TIMES THE SIZE OF EARTH--- IT MAY CONTAIN A MAXIMUM OF 18 ROBOTS, EACH OF WHICH IS ROUGHLY EQUAL TO ONE MAN IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT---

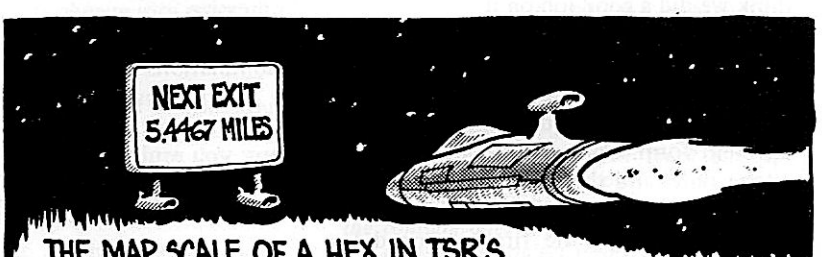


IN A COMBAT BETWEEN A MAN ARMED WITH A RAPIER AND ONE USING A DAGGER, YAQUINTO'S **SWASHBUCKLER** GIVES A 1-IN-6 CHANCE OF THE **DAGGER** BREAKING---



IN **ACE OF ACES**, BY NOVA, TWO PLANES ON A COLLISION COURSE SIMPLY PASS THROUGH EACH OTHER-- *(Derek Fitzer)*

GUERRILLA UNITS IN SPI'S **MINUTEMAN** ARE DESIGNATED BY CODE NAMES SUCH AS "SPOCK," "MAFIA," "DEEP THROAT" AND "BATMAN"--- *(Joseph Miranda)*




THE MAP SCALE OF A HEX IN TSR'S **GAMMA WORLD** IS GIVEN AS "ROUGHLY 43.7 KILOMETERS"--- THIS UNUSUAL VALUE CONVERTS NEATLY TO THE USEFUL AMOUNT OF ABOUT 27.3 MILES--- *(Jim Simons)*

BEN SARGENT

# WHERE WE'RE GOING

It's Origins ballot time again. If you're a TSG subscriber, you can fill out the ballot on the inside back mailer cover and send it in. If you're not a subscriber, you will have to photocopy the ballot on page 18. (You could tear it out, of course, but if I ever find out you've been tearing up your copy of TSG, I'll be terribly hurt. So will you, when our Complaints Department catches you . . . you *do* remember about the Complaints Department, don't you?)

I'm not going to sit here and tell you to vote for everything we published. We're good – but not *that* good. But I do have a few suggestions:

(1) TSG for Best Professional Role-Playing Magazine. Always the bridesmaid and never the bride – that's been TSG. We always get nominated, but never get the brass ring. This could be our year, though. I admit I'm biased, but we've gotten even better over the past few months. Time to give our friends at the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* a run for their money!

(2) *Fire & Movement* for Best Professional Boardgaming Magazine. That doesn't concern a lot of you. If you never read F&M, don't vote for it. It gets enough legitimate votes from the people who *do* read it – it's won for four years in a row . . . the only really serious competition was *Strategy & Tactics,* which has only had one issue in the last year.

(3) Best Role-Playing Adventure: ***Sunday Drivers.*** It's a good thing this category isn't divided into fantasy and science fiction, though, because I'd have no idea which one to put it in. Whatever it is, I think we did a good job on it.

(4) Best Science Fiction Boardgame: ***Ogre.*** No, I'm not kidding. Under the nomination rules, an older game can be eligible if it is reissued in a significantly different form. *Ogre* was out of print for a long time, and then came out in a very different form – one that reached a lot more people than the first edition did. It's up to the awards committee whether it can be eligible, but I think it is.

I'd put in a plug for ***Illuminati,*** but I have no idea what category it fits in, and I'm not quite egotistical enough to demand that the Origins people invent a new one for it. "Best Totally Peculiar Game"? No way. Life is hard.

There are a number of good releases competing for 1982 honors: as long as I'm throwing plugs around, I might as well mention some of my favorites from other publishers. For openers, GDW's ***Striker*** has got to be the clear winner for Best Miniatures Rules, at least as far as our side of the hobby is concerned. It's probably got a serious chance at Best All-Time SF Miniatures Rules, too! And the Martian Metals ***Traveller*** miniatures ought to be a shoo-in for Best Vehicular Miniatures Series.

On the fantasy side, the ***Fineous Phigures*** are my favorite. There have been several good SF figure releases: I don't have a specific pick.

RPGs there have been this year, and in plenty . . . but nothing really exciting. Of the wholly new efforts, one of the better ones is TSR's ***Gangbusters,*** even though the theme has limited appeal. Overall, I'd give the nod to the revised and reissued ***Champions.*** It's different enough to deserve consideration again in 1982, and it's a heckuva good game. There have been enough good supplements that I have to name two that will give ***Sunday Drivers*** serious competition in that category: FBI's ***CityBook I*** and Chaosium's ***Trollpack.***

The best fantasy boardgame for 1982 was probably Eon's ***Borderlands.*** That's a game that I predict will get more attention as time goes on. As for "Best Adventure for Home Computer" – tastes differ widely, but I'd put my money on one of SSI's new ***Rapidfire*** games. They're impressive.

Anyway – send in your ballot. This is a *nominations* ballot. If you want to vote on the final ballot, read the fine print in the first paragraph on the ballot instructions; you probably qualify.

### Missing Persons

Occasionally we manage to lose track of somebody interesting. Experience proves that a good way to find these people again is to ask our readers' help. So: If you know anything about these folk, can you let us know?

Missing Person One: K. Allen Bjorke. A few years ago, he was living in Minneapolis, I have no idea where he might be now. He designed a game called ***Salyut and Enterprise*** and submitted it to Metagaming. It was rejected. For myself, though, I kind of liked it . . . If you're still out there someplace, Kevin, get in touch. I'd like to talk about that game.

Missing Person Two: Milo B. Shiff. Earlier in 1982 he was promoting a new game magazine to be called *Recreation.* He had what sounded like pretty good plans: he even went so far as to place some ads for subscriptions. He also invited me to do a column on *Ogre* and ***G.E.V.*** But he's not answering letters any more. Has anybody seen Milo? Tell him if he doesn't want that first column I wrote, I'd like it back – and if *Recreation* is still going to come out, to send us a press release for Scanner.

Missing Person Three: Not really a person except in the legal sense . . . "Sten Productions" of La Jolla, CA. They produced a game a few years back, called ***Battle Sphere.*** Very nice components, simple combat system; it got a couple of good reviews and then dropped from sight. So did Sten Productions; letters to them come back marked "not deliverable, unable to forward." Which is a pity, because somebody ought to put that game back in print.

### Getting the Lead Out

As of mid-November, SJ Games is getting out of the lead miniature business. Oh, it made money, all right – in fact, we couldn't keep up with the demand. That's the whole problem in a nutshell. In order to do justice to the ***Ogre*** and ***Autoduel*** lines, we'd have to invest in more machinery, hire more people . . . in short, become a full-scale miniatures company. I'd hoped to do miniatures as a sideline, but it doesn't work that way. You've got to make a real commitment. Since we can't do miniatures properly without becoming a miniatures company, we won't do them at all.

That doesn't mean that our miniatures will become unavailable. Right now, we're negotiating with a couple of the largest and most respected companies – people who will do justice to the lines, keep up with demand, and deal fairly with both dealers and buyers. That will let us concentrate on games and magazines – which is what we *are* equipped to do.

I'm not sorry we got into miniatures; it was a lot of fun, and we all learned a great deal. Personally, I enjoy playing with miniatures (and my collection is a lot bigger now than it was before I had

my own lead pot . . .). But it's time to admit that it *was* a sideline – a hobby – and let it go.

### You Can't Say B******i

In last month's WWG, I mentioned an amusing letter we'd gotten from the attorneys for TSR, concerning our "infringement" of their exclusive right to draw pictures of Bolotomi and Beholders . . . Well, our attorney wrote them a polite letter, and received a reply stating, in part:

". . . TSR has decided not to pursue its claim with respect to your client's prior so-called "parody" use of TSR's Beholder and Bolotomi characters. TSR, however, requests that in the future, *The Space Gamer* delete any reference to or use of TSR Characters."

Taken literally, this would seem to imply that TSR does not want anybody to talk or write about any of its products in any way without prior permission . . . or is that just the way lawyers draft letters? Stay tuned.

### Onward to 1983

Right now, we're planning for 1983 to be a year of consolidation. We've been growing quickly – maybe *too* quickly. Once the January (HIA) releases are out, we're going to take some time to get organized, expand our office space, think about incorporating . . . all those little details you skip when your business increases more than threefold in one year. So you may not see too many releases between February and July.

As for those January releases – they're coming along. They'll include the two ***Illuminati*** expansion sets, the truck module for ***Car Wars*** (still called ***Truck Stop*** until we come up with something better), and the boxed versions of ***Necromancer*** and ***Battlesuit.***

Some people have asked why we should put out a boxed version of ***Battlesuit*** a month after it appears in the magazine – and why they should buy it. Well, if you don't like the version in the issue, you *shouldn't* buy the boxed game; the changes aren't that big. But if you do like ***Battlesuit,*** you might consider the box, because you'll be getting more and *larger* counters and a much bigger map. (Right now we're planning two mapsheets – one the same as the one in the magazine, but bigger to accommodate the bigger counters – the other one linking to it. Then again, maybe not. We shall see.) There will also be a few optional rules that didn't make it into the magazine version due to lack of space. I think you'll like it.

*–Steve Jackson*

# NEXT ISSUE

***Next month's TSG should bring you:***

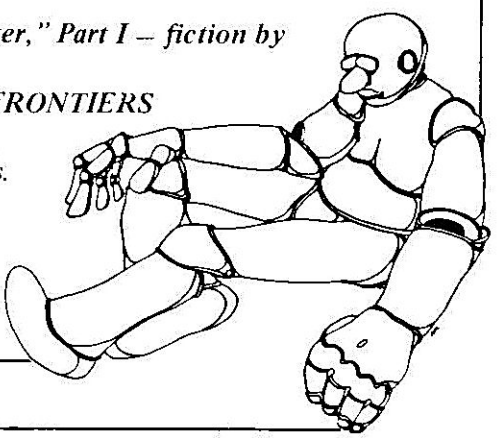
***"Robot Safari," our Huntress scenario contest prize winner;***

***"Year in Review" – Steve Jackson looks at the gaming world in 1982;***

***"A Cold Heart Has the Hunter," Part I – fiction by David Myers;***

***Featured reviews of STAR FRONTIERS and BERSERKER; and***

***Hermaphroditic Gumby-oids.***



# GAME MASTER

*GAME MASTER exists to answer questions on your favorite games. If you have a rules question or play problem, send it in. Questions to be answered will be chosen on the basis of general interest. They will be first referred to the game publisher or designer. If no response is received, GAME MASTER will offer its own interpretation of the rule. Sorry – no individual replies are possible.*

### CAR WARS

1. Most pickups I am familiar with have an open cargo compartment, and any alteration involves a loss of space (camper-tops) or an increase in weight (genuine campers). Is the cargo section of a ***Car Wars*** pickup presumed to be armored on the sides and rear? On the top?

2. Can an RV body (TSG 49; ***Sunday Drivers*** supplement) carry more than one turret? If so, do the two turrets obscure each other's fire (assuming the two turrets are mounted fore and aft, which seems the only reasonable arrangement)?

3. Can an RV body equipped with an assault ramp (presumably rear-mounted) launch motorcycles while in motion? If so, how slow must the RV be moving, which way must the bikes be facing, and what degree of hazard should this be considered?

4. What are the full specifications of the super RV power plant (not given that I could find in TSG 49 or ***Sunday Drivers***)? If mounted in another vehicle, does the 80 mph limit still hold? I have heard of real vans having truck (or even aircraft) engines mounted in what is usually the cargo section.

5. The collision rules assume that both colliding objects are equally crushable. How should the collision forces be allocated if a car strikes a genuinely solid object (such as an arena wall)?

–Chris Steinhice

*1. The cargo section of a pickup is presumed to be styled like the compartment of a present-day pickup truck: open at top, enclosed (and armored) on rear and sides.*

*2. Yes, two turrets could be carried. Represent each turret by a circle drawn on the counter (no smaller than 1/8" for a one-space turret and 3/16" for a two-space turret). Line of fire, traced from the center of one turret, may not pass through another turret.*

*3. Yes, cycles can be launched while the RV is in motion. The bikes must be facing in the opposite direction from the RV's line of travel. No hazard to the RV is involved. However, the hazard to a cycle is D1 for each 5mph the RV is moving. In addition, the cycle starts with difficulty equal to the point the carrying RV's marker is at the moment – that is, if the RV's marker is at -3 when the cycle is launched, and the RV is travelling at 15 mph, the cycle starts out performing a net D6 maneuver! Only one cycle may be launched per turn. Note also that if the acceleration of the cycle is less than the forward speed of the RV, the cycle will, of necessity, be moving in reverse when it hits the ground.*

*4. You will not find the full specifications for the super RV power plant, or for any other RV power plant anywhere . . . we have not worked them out yet! When* ***Truck Stop*** *appears, your questions should be answered.*

*5. Collision forces are not "allocated" – if the collision does five dice of damage, it does five dice to each object involved. In the case of an object which is considered undamageable, such as an arena wall, you simply don't bother figuring it out. The car still takes full damage. The difference between a solid stone wall and a (relatively) crushable car becomes less important at high speed anyway.*

*–SJ*

# News Briefs

### *Stellar Conquest* Moves to AH

Avalon Hill, which has quite a history of picking up game titles from other companies, has acquired the rights to Metagaming's ***Stellar Conquest.*** Avalon Hill personnel did not give details of the acquisition, but AH's Joe Balkoski confirmed the move.

No concrete publication date is set. "We'd be lucky to get it out by Origins," stated Balkoski. "Maybe by next Christmas." ***Stellar Conquest*** will appear in Bookcase Game format.

### Mayfair Acquires New SF Licenses

Mayfair, following hot on the heels of its *Thieves' World Sanctuary* boardgame, has announced the acquisition of gaming rights to C.J. Cherryh's *Downbelow Station* and Joe Haldeman's *Forever War.* Some game materials will be shown at the HIA show and the game will be released soon after.

### StarMaster Agreement Reached

After several months of cordial negotiation, Schubel & Son and ActiVision have reached an agreement concerning the trademark "StarMaster." Schubel & Son, the registered owner of the trademark, has licensed ActiVision to use the name for their arcade video game. Schubel & Son plans to use the proceeds from the license to purchase additional computer equipment and an offset printing press to further expand its play-by-mail business.

### Co-Op PBM Ad Effort Fails

An attempt to organize play-by-mail game companies to run cooperative ads, promoting the PBM field as a whole, has ended without success.

Schubel & Son, the California-based operators of ***Tribes of Crane, StarMaster, Catacombs of Chaos,*** etc., had organized the ad campaign, which was to have taken the form of full-page ads in leading game magazines. The ads described the PBM industry in general, with space at the bottom for the names of several sponsoring companies. The purpose, according to Schubel's Duane Wilcoxon, was "cooperation, cutting advertising costs, and recruiting new players" by inviting readers to send for free information from each company listed in the ads.

Of over 20 companies contacted, though, none chose to participate.

### New PBM Company Forms

Nolan Bond, formerly of Yaquinto Games, and Charles Christy are partners in a new play-by-mail game company. Adventures Design Group. ADG's first effort will be a Bronze Age "development of civilization" game, running on an IBM Personal Computer with 12-megabyte hard disk drive. It's scheduled to start playtesting soon, with open availability in January or February 1983. ADG can be reached at P.O. Box 821072, Dallas, TX 75382-1072.

# Convention Calendar

February 11-13: NORCON '83. Gaming con. For information, contact NorCon 83, 320 Caledonia Ave., Dorval, Quebec H9S 2Y2.

*February 11-13: WARCON IX. For information, write Texas A&M University, MSC Recreation, P.O. Box J-1, College Station, TX 77844.

February 19-21: ORCCON 1983. Gaming con. For information, write: Strategicon PR Dept., P.O. Box 2577, Anaheim, CA 92804.

February 26-27: GAME FAIRE. RPGs, microarmor, chess, arcade games, etc. For information, contact Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane, WA 99201 or 509/325-3358.

*March 4-6: MICRO-CON '83. SF and gaming con. Contact Micro-Con '83, 601 River Road No. 604, San Marcos, TX 78666.

March 5-6: CENTCON I. ***Squad Leader, D&D, Backgammon, Risk, Kingmaker, Top Secret,*** etc. Contact CentCon I, 471 Commonwealth Avenue, New Britain, CT 06053.

*March 24-27: AGGIECON. SF con. Contact Cepheid Variable, P.O. Box J-1, College Station, TX 77844.

March 25-27: FANTASYLAIR '83. Gaming and SF con. For information contact Northern Oklahoma Dungeoneers, P.O. Box 241, Ponca City, OK 74602.

March 26-27: NOVA 8. Gaming and SF con. Contact The Order of Leibowitz, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48063.

April 22-24: CONTRETEMPS 2. Gaming and SF con. Send SASE to Contretemps, P.O. Box 12422, Omaha, NE 68112.

May 27-29: SWAMPCON-4. SF con. Send SASE to BRSFL-SwampCon, P.O. Box 14238, Baton Rouge, LA 70898.

May 27-29: CONQUEST IV+10. SF con. For information contact ConQuest IV+10, P.O. Box 36212, Kansas City, MO 64111.

June 10-12: X-CON 7. SF and gaming con. For information, contact X-Con, P.O. Box 7, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0007.

*July 2-4: TEXCON: 1983. Gaming con. Send SASE to David Ladyman, 8028 Gessner No. 1805, Austin, TX 78753.

*July 14-17: ORIGINS '83. Adventure gaming con. Contact MDG, Box 656, Wyandotte, MI 48192.

July 15-17: OKON '83 / FILKCON EAST '83. SF cons. Send SASE to P.O. Box 4229, Tulsa, OK 74104.

SJ GAMES and TSG will be attending the conventions marked above with asterisks.

# PBM Update

*PBM Update reports on professionally-moderated play-by-mail games. Notices are monthly. Copy deadline is 60 days previous to the first of the month, for the issue in which the notice is to appear. (Deadline for the April issue is February 1.) All copy should be typed and double-spaced. Notices should not exceed 200 words in length. TSG reserves the right to edit copy as necessary.*

### Schubel & Son

*Company News:* We have recently purchased a new letter-quality printer and an advanced, full-feature modem. The acquisition of this advanced computer equipment will not only greatly increase the quality of materials from Schubel & Son, but will also expand and improve the services offered to our players.

*The Tribes of Crane*

We are pleased to announce several major improvements and expansions to the ***Tribes of Crane*** system. We have added several advanced political positions; these include Viceroys, Regents, and Viceregents. The advanced political positions will include many new advantages to those players working within the established political factions (the Dark Union, Blood Trust, etc.). The battle programs for sea battles, land battles, and sieges have been expanded and improved to allow greater realism and versatility in large-scale conflicts. Also so available are several new Special Information Sheets to cover the expansion of the rules system.

*Crane I:* At the urging of the leaders of Mada, Eylon has abandoned the city of Mada and has chosen to fight enemies of AFN on the ice fields of the frozen north. The initial fighting occurred on the road to Jess in which Eylon forces ambushed three AFN forces, utterly destroying two and inflicting heavy casualties on the third. The bulk of the AFN forces are currently at Mada (having recently captured the

abandoned city) and are expected to pursue and attack Eylon armies shortly.

*Crane II:* Rebels, with the aid of outside forces, have clashed with the government forces in the coastal city of Alexis. The rebels lost many of the initial engagements by allied tribes. The tide has begun to swing against city leader Sauron, and at present he and his supporters are besieged within his palace. The recent arrival of Halton Factor is expected to spell the end of Sauron's rule.

Elsewhere, fighting continues between Valorous forces and the Shadow Alliance at the south polar city of King. Recent clashes have occurred between supporters of the Halton factor and the Western Alliance of Tribes (WAOT). Negotiations are presently under way in an attempt to avoid major confrontations.

*Star Venture*

The first attack by a major player alliance has occurred recently at the colony Valley in the Cape system. The attacking force contained nearly 200 crew and troops, and 50 combat vehicles. Colony Valley was well-defended by nearly 1000 crew, colonists, and aliens, a dozen combat vehicles, and six forts. After a long, bloody combat the attackers were repulsed. The second attack wave contained over 500 beings and quickly overran the defenses; Valley has fallen.

*StarMaster*

In the Central Galaxy, the longtime bitter feud between the 7th generation Lyranian Star Imperium and the 6th generation Vekkan Theocratic Hegemony has apparently reached a turning point with the Lyranian attack on the Vekkan homeworld. The Lyranian attack fleet consisted of nearly 50 of the vast War Sphere 2Ns against the Vekkan planetary defense fleets containing over 800 Guardian Fortresses, 30 War Sphere Hs, and several probes armed with AntiLife Generator bombs. The Vekkan planetary defense fleets were completely destroyed by the more advanced Lyranian weapons, while the Lyranian attack fleet lost but 14 War Spheres. The victorious Lyranians quickly landed their Imperial Assault troops, 30,000 Annihilist-Guards armed with antimatter particle-propelling gateway beams. The defending Vekkan forces consisted of 25,000 Annihilist troopers armed with negative-nova beams. The desperate Vekkan defenders were no match for the elite Lyranian forces, despite the use of powerful matter-antimatter bombs. The Vekkan homeworld has fallen, but throughout the galaxy the Vekkan call for a jihad against Lyranian is being answered by Vekkan colonies and other reptilian races. More fighting is expected.

*Duane Wilcoxson*

### Central Texas Computing, Inc.

*Universe III*

*Quadrant V:* A group of Terran captains seems to have made an alliance with the Muar Empire in exchange for trade benefits. The Explorers' Guild appears to be seriously considering a concerted attack on members of the Clave Alliance.

*Quadrant VI:* A persistent rumor is that impact zones are actually Etuel star systems whose inhabitants have constructed Dyson spheres and withdrawn from contact with the rest of the Universe. The Etuel, in typical helpful fashion, neither confirm nor deny this.

*Quadrant VII:* At least two Terran captains have managed to penetrate the Boundary Layer and exited from Quadrant VII, and their current whereabouts are unknown. Rumor has it that someone has unleashed a robot battleship that attacks on sight.

*Quadrant VIII:* Rumors of a beacon net continue, though the Etuel have yet to make one available to Terran captains. At least one captain has managed to take his ship through a black hole successfully, though the ship was damaged.

*Company News:* After several fits and starts, it looks like we'll wind up purchasing a multi-user Fortune system.

With the Motorola 68000 chip, hard disks, and 1 megabyte of RAM, things should go faster and be more intricate. Work on *Nomads* will be finished on the Fortune in early 1983.

*David Bolduc*

### Game Systems, Inc.

*Earthwood*

Game 9 has just begun and it looks as if games 10 and 11 will quickly be filled. Remaining positions are now open for these games.

*Game 1:* The Halflings have become the most recent victims in this game as the city of Snuvelton fell before storming armies. An earthquake has struck the northeast region of Earthwood, causing severe damage to a number of cities. It is becoming common knowledge that a single ruler is now in possession of six spies.

*Game 2:* Many players have been eliminated in this game. The few remaining players are vying for power and control of each others' cities.

*Game 3:* The status quo remains here as each of the players attempts to increase his power before launching any massive attacks. A number of players have found, to their regret, that not all NPCs are happy to join the ranks.

*Game 4:* The Halfling city of Snuvelton is burying large numbers of people due to lack of food. Reports of discontent continue while city leaders ponder the problem. A powerful mage and his growing dragon armies travel at will about Earthwood.

*Game 5:* Scandal raises its ugly head in the city of Escobar as charges of embezzlement are brought against city officials. The Spies' Guild reports the largest single treasury theft in Earthwood history from a well-guarded city.

*Game 6:* The battle lines are drawn. Mammoth battles are taking place around Rume. Early tallies show significant numbers of casualties. The defenders still hold – even as a new army arrives.

*Game 7:* This continues to be one of the most active games. Challenges, alliances, and backstabs highlight the activity in this game. The Anti-Stardom faction continues to look for support. However, no one seems to know who Stardom is.

*Game 8:* Massive starvation continues to run rampant in the city of Rume. A major conflict has erupted between the Giants and Macendians over the ownership of Paclancia. The Hill Dwarves continue to seek allies. This game rivals Game 7 for intrigue and combat.

*Pete Stassun*

### Clemens & Associates

*Universe II*

*Quadrant I:* The DOW and ICP Alliances attempted to blockade Mufrid, but were forced to retreat as RSS reinforcements arrived. There are numerous rumors of planned attacks on more Etuel systems.

*Quadrant II:* While some alliances are transferring ships into other quadrants, the Ixtli seem to be engaged in a massive buildup. The Etuel will need assistance if they attack.

*Quadrant III:* The recent conflicts have subsided and the battered alliances have pulled back to regroup. Some of the ships are only a shadow of their original strength.

*Quadrant IV:* The Unity Confederation is continuing the colonial expansion started earlier, even though many of their strongest ships have left the quadrant.

*Regajian Empire:* With the empire now stabilized, a period of rebuilding is under way. More Terrans are joining the empire in Quadrants I and II.

*Ixtli Empire:* The empire has grown rapidly with the addition of many new ships and colonies.

*Muar Empire:* A new task force has been added to the empire. Now every border has a scheduled patrol.

*Company News:* By the time this issue is sent out, we should be accepting sign-ups for our new tribal PBM game, ***Terra II.***

*Jon Clemens*

### Big City, Inc.

*Ganglord*

District Commissioner Ellison today confirmed rumors that a robbery was committed at the gaming area on Block 1049 during the broadcast of the Ohmeny-Jackson family duels. Ellison reported that one of the suspects, a Ms. Ruby Evans, was killed by security guards in the act of escaping. Ms. Evans was a member of a youth gang known as *Fallout.* The other seven to ten persons involved in the robbery got away with over UN$6,000, according to Ellison. Further investigations are under way. (Condensed from *The Big City News.*)

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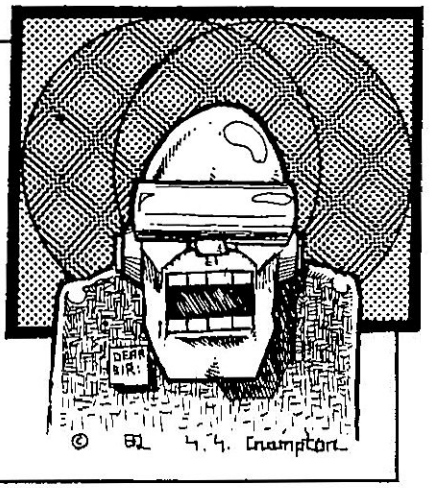
# Letters




*The Space Gamer* has gone slick! This could be good, or it could be a bad sign; that remains to be seen. TSG is advancing, growing, maturing. That's fine, if you can keep the one-on-one intimacy that you have had with your readers in the past. To me, and to many others, I'm sure, one of the ongoing strong points of TSG is its intimacy. Reading TSG is much like sitting down with its staff, creators, and contributors in a "bull session in print" of sorts. There are few things better than a rainy Saturday afternoon poised in my favorite chair, a good cup of coffee, and the newest issue of *The Space Gamer.*

As a result of the slick format, you have stated that TSG will be able to present more and sharper pictures within its pages. Why not give us a "behind the scenes" look at the staff and working environment of the magazine and game company?

Just to let you know that you have readers of all ages – my five-year-old (who has developed quite amazing reading skills at such an early age) is also an avid fan of TSG. He particularly likes Murphy's Rules and was somewhat disappointed that there were none in issue 56. Flash From the Past: Michael (said son) really got a kick from seeing Steve Jackson playing video games at DalCon ("Wow, Daddy, just like a normal person!"). Another note from DalCon: Steve and another gentleman were making buttons at the booth during dealers' hours. Was that project just for the convention, or will the buttons find their way into the product line? Granted, they don't have much redeeming value, other than being neat as hell.

The reviews continue to be extremely valuable guides for those of us who have a limited game-buying budget. Have you ever considered publishing a collection of reviews as a guide for those who don't read TSG regularly? Granted, it could well be a massive work.

In the past, TSG ran a column called Reader Ads, which I believe died, maybe more than once, due to lack of interest. Maybe your readers simply did not know what to do with this service. An article of guidelines and ideas could be the key here, too. Readers could exchange ideas, dungeon designs, sell limited-run specialized games or prints, used games, books, etc. I don't believe there could be enough action that it could damage sales for any of the products your advertisers offer in your mag, yet it could prove to be a good service for your readers if they use it properly.

I sincerely look forward to each and every issue . . . it is one of those bright spots one looks forward to in life. It comes across in the magazine (at least, now it does) that all of those of you there enjoy putting this product out, too. I hope it stays that way, for your benefit as well as ours.

Darrel L. Byford and family
Allen, TX

*We don't intend to change the face-to-face attitude we try to present in our pages. For TSG, I try to promote a conversational writing style backed by journalistic research – that's a natural result of the professional background of Steve Jackson, Forrest Johnson, and myself. I think it works.*

*Don't look for a Behind the Scenes at TSG piece anytime soon; we're not ruling the idea out, but (unless we get a tremendous outpouring of mail supporting the idea) it'd be a while before we could get to it.*

*The buttons will be around for a while, but aren't exactly in our product line – we sell them mainly at conventions, for purposes of quick cash and general obnoxiousness.*

*We get about one request per month for a compendium of TSG reviews. That'll probably end up as a question in this issue's survey (not together yet at the time of this writing).*

*Yup, Reader Ads had a hard time sustaining an audience. We're quite willing to try again; they'd end up in a classifieds section in Scanner. Pertinent notes: $5 buys one insertion of 20 words or four lines (printed at 8-point type); they are available to individuals and amateur presses, but not to professional businesses.*

*And yes, we do get a kick out of putting the magazine together. TSG is a problem child, but it is fun. Glad you like it.*

*–AA*

The following is an errata/addenda piece to my "Splat Gun for ***Traveller***" article in TSG 56. First, several people have asked me why the splat gun is so illegal in the Imperium when it really isn't that much more terrible than some other weapons. The answer is that it is a favorite weapon of terrorists and has become so associated with terrorist use that anyone in possession of one is almost automatically assumed to be a terrorist by Imperial police and intelligence forces. The article was originally a part of my "Tools for Terrorists" article in TSG 49, which started as a sidebar for the "Terrorists in ***Traveller***" character generation system in TSG 46. Unfortunately, the terrorist aspect of the splat gun was lost in the translation. Correcting a couple of typos that crept in, the last line of the first column on page 8, the word "tripod" should be "bipod," and in the second column on that page, second complete paragraph, fourth sentence, the damage to the firer if the weapon explodes is 1d6 x 6, not simply 1d6. Also, the penetration ratings for use with ***Azhanti High Lightning*** (or ***Striker***) rules should be upgraded by 10 at effective range, 8 at long range, and 5 at extreme range. The article was written before ***Striker*** was released with the upgraded penetration values for RAM grenades. If using snub pistol ammo in the gun, use the penetration values as they appear in the article. Finally, I'd like to acknowledge that the explosive scatter gun was loosely adapted from the similar (but less detailed) splat rifle featured in *Space Quest* by Paul Hume and George Nyhen.

William A. Barton
Indianopolis, IN

I can't begin to tell you how much I enjoyed reading David Myers' story "The Worm" in TSG 57. As someone who runs a PBM game and has played quite a few, I found it hilarious – and true.

Thanks as well for Armintrout's two PBM reviews. Keep up the good work.

David Bolduc
Central Texas Computing

I just have to write and tell you how apathetic I feel about the latest issue (57). Why? Perhaps because I feel so strongly apathetic. Also because I think you can do better.

First, let me qualify this by stating that my mental emotional state has been unusual this past week, and my sleep schedule has been rather odd. Perhaps the best of your issues would have failed to register.

Another possible reason is the amount of advertising. I don't know if it's any higher than your normal, but it seemed as if there were an awful lot of it. So I counted. Eleven full pages of ads (was there a special on full-page ads?), seven half-page ads, and other ads plus the index to advertisers made 17½ pages. Out of 46 (not counting front and back covers), this meant you had 38% advertising. By contrast, the latest *Different Worlds* had a scant 9½ pages of advertising (issue 24), or 19%. I think this is a much better proportion. (Of course, I may be biased in my like of DW 24, since it had a review by me in it . . .)

So, what about the rest of TSG 57? The Buffalo Hunt review was okay, though ***CoC*** sounded much more interesting than ***HF***, from the descriptions. I guess it didn't live up to its promise. The color process for the illos didn't look so hot. The ***Universe III*** ad had much better color. The ***TFT*** handicaps seemed nice, though I'm not quite sure if this is a funny-once or not. "The Worm" was somewhat predictable, and didn't cover any new ground. The guide to submitting was interesting, but I'm not sure how useful. The ***Car Wars*** scenario/campaign was somewhat interesting, but I don't play ***CW***. The trivial spells were fun, but the descriptions seemed over-long.

Not much else of note, either + or –.

By the way, I find the glossy paper to be less attractive. Matte paper is just easier to read from.

David Dunham
San Antonio, TX

*Advertising content always has been, and will continue to be, somewhat high. Most other magazines in the industry are printed at a loss; we can't afford to. We won't provide much service to the industry by going out of business (qualified differing opinions on* that *statement from our readership will be ignored). Fortunately, advertising generally rates fairly high among our readers.*

*–AA*

I've subscribed to *The Space Gamer* since issue 6 (back in the dark ages) and I've decided it's about time I wrote and expressed my opinions on the magazine on which I've spent so much money.

First and foremost, let me compliment your excellent work since taking over the magazine. Looking back I find it hard to understand why I continued to subscribe, considering the poor quality of issues 17 through 26, unless I was just hoping, despite the evidence, that the magazine would improve. My hopes were totally justified, however, with issue 27, when Steve took over, and since then I have greatly enjoyed TSG with few reservations.

I couldn't care less about *Car Wars*, and I think you devote about five times more space to it than it deserves. I'm sick to death of reading about it in the magazine, and I've never even seen a copy of the game itself (nor do I ever want to). You can imagine what I think of issue 58 being devoted to it. *Please* cut down on *Car Wars* articles in the future.

Still, all in all, I will continue to subscribe and look forward to future issues, though perhaps not 58.

Ronald Smith,
Ft. Myers, FL

*About Car Wars material: Request granted, effective immediately.*

*I've recently been submitted to a lot of pressure to put CW material in the magazine – not from overhead, but from our readers. However, with the creation of* Autoduel Quarterly, *all that pressure shifts from me to Chris Smith, ADQ's editor. Have fun, Chris. There will be some CW material in upcoming issues, but not as much as in recent months.*

*–AA*

I am writing in response to Ronald Pehr's review of *Wizard's Realm* which appeared in your July 1982 issue. I agree with Mr. Pehr's comments on the combat and character generation systems. The combat system is far and away the easiest to understand that I have seen in years of playing games such as *AD&D*, *Traveller*, *Stormbringer*, etc. Also, the character generation and skills acquisition systems provide more "realism" and variety than systems which restrict certain character classes from using certain skills or magical abilities. In *Wizard's Realm*, it is quite possible for an adventurer/thief to use a 'detect traps' spell, or for a warrior/ranger to magically heal wounds, both advantages in their respective lines of work. I also agree that some rules may require a certain amount of guesswork. A familiarity with medieval history and fantasy would definitely be an asset.

I must disagree with Mr. Pehr on a couple of other points. I have not, as yet, had to do an inordinate amount of "pageflipping." Also, his comment that "pages are out of order" refers to only two pages, a defect which can be corrected by five minutes' work at a photocopier. In answer to his question whether anyone will want to overcome these supposed difficulties, I must say "Yes" most emphatically. *Wizard's Realm* is a well-written, well-conceived fantasy role-playing system which can be enjoyed by neophyte and experienced player alike. I would recommend this game to anyone who wishes to enter fantasy role-playing for the first time, or who wishes to add to his game library. The investment is small compared to the many enjoyable hours of play to be gained.

William W. Hughes
Biloxi, MS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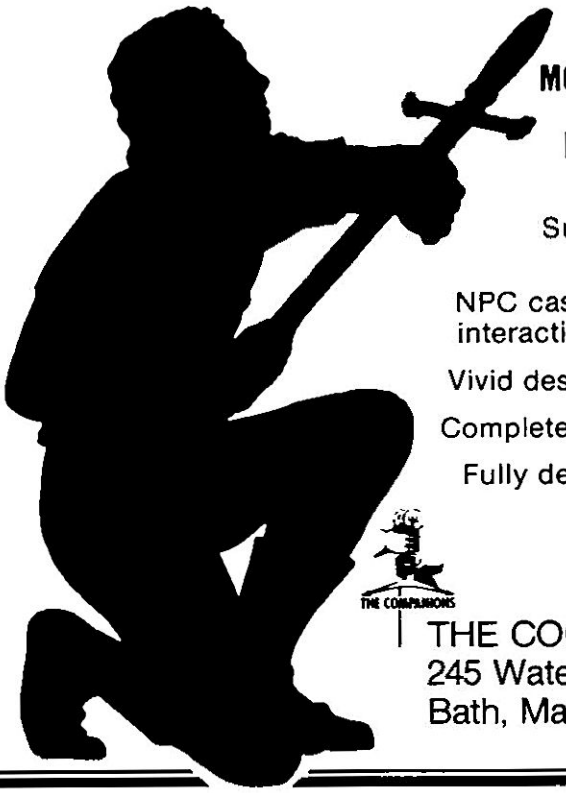

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# CAPSULE REVIEWS

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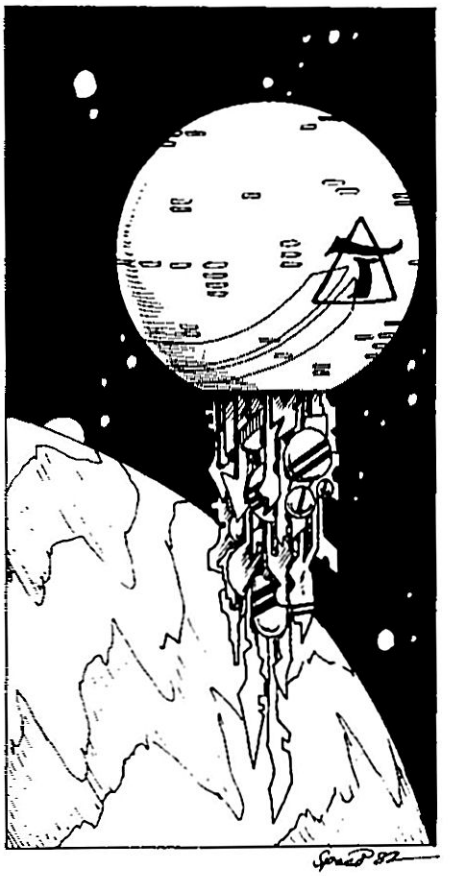
*The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine.*

Games and game items for which we have assigned or received reviews include *Atlantis, Berserker, Berzerk,* revised *Champions, Cosmic Ark, Curse on Hareth, Daredevils, Demons to Diamonds, Earthwood, Encounters, Endless Quests, Feudal Lords, Fire Fighter, Ganglord, Goblin, HexChess, Iceberg, Lost Colony, Man, Myth & Magic, Pitfall, Player Boards, Sneak 'n Peek, Space Jockey, Star Frontiers, Star Venture, Starleader: Assault, Through Dungeons Deep,* revised *Villains & Vigilantes,* and *Yar's Revenge.*

Games and game items for which we are seeking reviews include *Battlemats, Behind Enemy Lines, Book of Treasure Maps III, Caves and Caverns, Corsairs of Tallibar, Demons of Dundurn, Dragon Rage, Druids of Doom, Escape from Altassar, Famine in Far-Go, Fasolt in Peril, Force, Galaxy, Gangster, Helltank Destroyer, Heroes and Villains, Homeworld, Illuminati, Kamakura, Murder in Harmony, Nexus, Pirates of Hagrost, Questers, Runes, Shield Maidens of Sea Rune, SoloQuest II, Star Explorer, Star Maze, Star Sector Atlas* 2, *Star Smuggler, Starfleet Voyages, Starsilver Trek, Sunday Drivers, Tome of Mighty Magic, Trollpack, Voyager I, Warrior, Weapons & Castles, Witches Court Marshes,* and *Wondrous Weapons.*



THE JOURNEY, *Mechanoid Invasion,* Book 2 (Palladium Books); $4.95. Designed by Kevin Siembieda. One 10" x 7" 58-page rule book. For referee and variable number of players; playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

For those who, like myself, have been anxiously awaiting the second book in Kevin Siembieda's *Mechanoid Invasion* trilogy, THE JOURNEY may be seen as a mixed blessing. Eight pages longer than the original book, THE JOURNEY is a veritable *potpourri* of new equipment, vehicles, powers, weapons, creatures, and situations for both the besieged human colonists of the planet Gideon and their Mechanoid invaders. In fact, just about everything seems to have been thrown in except the Gideon Colony kitchen sink: new colony weapons, including the Juggernaut environmental battle armor, intelligent limited range missiles, and the block-long Balrog Destroyer supertank; new Mechanoids, including the Octopus, Black Widow, Overlord, and Oracle (the latter not necessarily hostile to humans), plus the 19-*kilometer*-long Mechanoid Battle Cruiser; the last survivor of the ancient residents of the planet who built the underground transit system of Book I; a 4th psionic level; rules for magic (actually an inter-dimensional power system supplied by a "benevolent race of parasitic energy wraiths"); deck plans of the continent-sized Mechanoid mother ship and its system of pipes, tunnels, and ducts, with encounter tables for these; mutants and/or beasties that inhabit said tunnels; and even a special (frozen) sleeper team of human saboteurs whose cryogenic cocoons keep them in suspended animation generations longer than planned, *a la The Morrow Project* – whew! One wonders what is left to go into Book 3! While THE JOURNEY covers the last days of the human colonists on Gideon, the main focus of the book surrounds the survivors' exodus from the planet before its final destruction by the Mechanoids and their subsequent generations' efforts at survival as "rats" within the tunnels of the mother ship while journeying to the Mechanoid homeworld.

Bizarre as the premise of JOURNEY seems (especially after the comparative rationality of TM1 itself), there is much of use here for those who enjoyed the first book, namely the new weapons, etc., which give the colonists a bit more of a fighting chance against their robotoid enemies (although the new Mechanoid weapons, if employed well, still make the colonists the underdogs). The new rules for Rover and thief characters may make those options more attractive. And the magic, while seemingly a toss-in, actually is consistent within the structure of the game setting. In fact, the magic powers are more believable than some of the psi powers of Book 1.

The main problems with JOURNEY come from the "adventures within the tunnels" premise. With this, *Mechanoid Invasion*'s *D&D* roots become a bit too evident. What started out as an interesting invasion RPG has degenerated into *D&D/Gamma World* in space. In addition, the improbabilities of a ship the size of the Mechanoid mother ship, easily overlooked in the first book since it played no real part, are now forced into the foreground, seriously jarring one's willful suspension of disbelief.

In short, just too many ideas and too many improbabilities are crammed into THE JOURNEY for it to really stand as a viable extension of its far-superior predecessor. Still if you did enjoy *The Mechanoid Invasion* and wish to add some of the new equipment, etc., to your continuing struggle on Gideon – or if a science fantasy quest through the pipelines of the mother ship actually appeals to you – then you might find THE JOURNEY worth your time to look into in spite of it all.

– *William A. Barton*

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MERC (Fantasy Games Unlimited); $10.00. Designed by Paul D. Baader, Lawrence Sangee, and Walter Mark. Boxed, includes 35-page rule-book, five player-aid cards, three dice. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

Yet another entry in the growing list of role-playing games, MERC adds a new wrinkle to fantasy RPG: The players take the roles of post-World War II mercenaries, roving the Third World under the admiring gaze of the Corporation (read Game Master) in search of money, fame, and the perfect ambush site. Players may side with or against a government, and be sent on either covert or overt missions (the sample mission provided pits a team of six mercenaries against a sleeping Rhodesian village full of black terrorists).

This game fills a hole in the RPG market: The need for modern role-playing games (but not too modern, as in *Gamma World*). Military counter-insurgency activity is the main focus of armed conflict today, but is seldom if ever brought to the gaming table. Perhaps it is that guerilla hunting is just not as exciting as, say, *Top Secret*; MERC disproves this. The opportunities for gaming out of the top news stories of today or 20 years ago on a role-playing/

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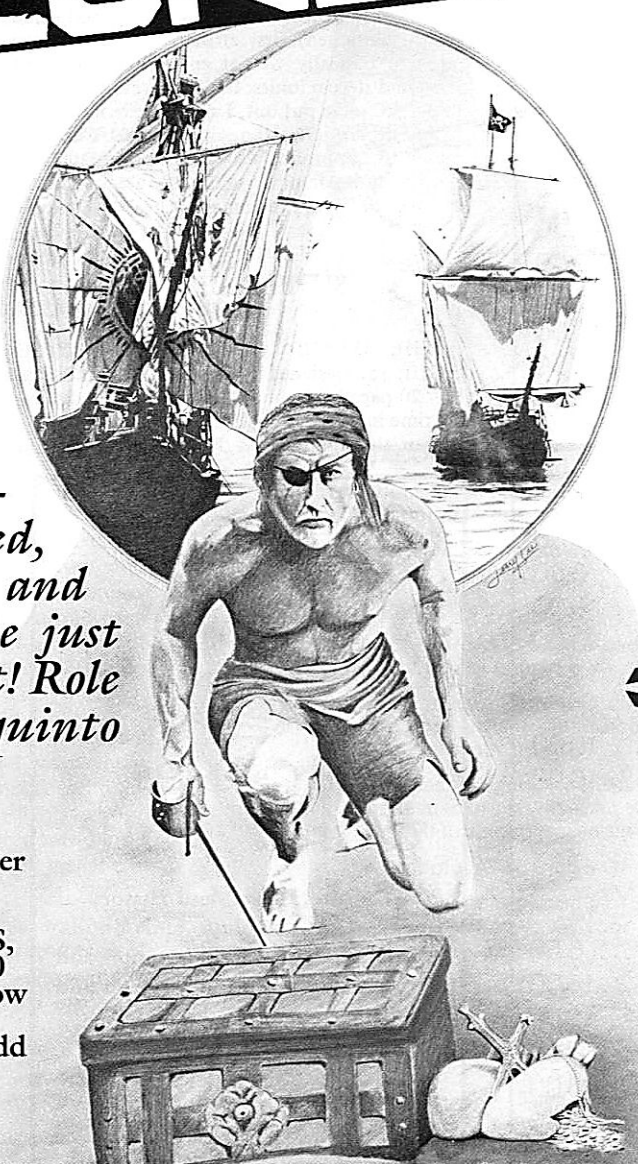

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skirmish scale are manifold. The game has one of the most realistic playing aids I have ever seen: A clear plastic sheet with a crosshairs printed on it, used as an overlay on a human silhouette for sniping/assassination! The damage assessment and character-generation systems are also very interesting.

The game does have several weak points, due mostly to inadequate development, I think. An extensive array of exotic weapons is laid out, yet they are all practically identical, with little or no allowance for the special qualities of each. The range of heavier weapons and available vehicles is severely limited. Many small yet important points are left out: How much bigger is a Casualty Zone than a Kill Zone? Are the differences between a British SLR and a Belgian FN really significant to the game? And so on. Characters can also be hit by quite a few bullets before they go down. Sketchiness in the rules at certain points does not add much to playability.

All in all, though, this is quite a good game for an (assumed) first effort – I feel its flaws are due basically to not enough development time and design limits. If a later, revised edition of MERC were put out, I would heartily recommend it. As it is, though, I would warn the buyer to "approach with caution" unless he is already quite familiar with the subject matter, in order to fill in the numerous holes.

*– Brian R. Train*

## SUPPLEMENTS

THE ISLAND OF DR. APOCALYPSE (FGU); $5. Designed by Bill Willingham. 8½" x 11" 20-page book. Number of players and playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

For those *Villains & Vigilantes* heroes who successfully slugged out their *Death Duel With the Destroyers* in FGU's adventure of that name, there is now the opportunity to match powers with the Destroyers' employer in THE ISLAND OF DR. APOCALYPSE. ISLAND picks up where *Death Duel* ended: The Destroyers have been defeated by the forces of good, but the threat of the sinister Dr. Apocalypse to destroy selected U.S. cities unless Manhattan Island is evacuated and ceded to him still hangs over the country like a miasma. Agents of FISH, the government agency assigned to dealings with superpowered beings, have traced the villain to Nacht Island, a small group in the Atlantic Ocean, and have briefed the heroes on what has been discovered about Apocalypse and his base. The crusaders now have only six days in which to recover from their fight with the Destroyers and defeat Apocalypse. The scenario includes all the infomation needed by the gamemasters to provide the player-characters with a challenging and interesting battle against evil, including complete stats on Dr. Apocalypse and the various guardians of his island, maps of all the installations and other sites of interest with info on their inhabitants or guardians, and guidelines on how to run the adventure to give the players the greatest enjoyment. There's even a brief section on what to do if Dr. Apocalypse defeats the heroes.

ISLAND should prove quite an interesting outing for even the most powerful group of superheroes, especially when combined with *Death Duel.* And the recap of the first adventure makes it possible to play as a stand-alone scenario. The histories of Nacht Island and Dr. Apocalypse add considerable flavor to the adventure, and the various red herrings tossed in should keep the players on their toes and guessing what might turn up next. Doc Apoc's island base, too, is almost the epitome of the scientific criminal's perfect hideout. Lex Luthor or Dr. Doom would feel right at home. And FGU's continued practice of outlining all NPCs in both original and revised *V&V* stats is a plus for those who don't yet own the new edition.

What problems appear in ISLAND are mostly minor. I would have preferred, for instance, guidelines for determining the numbers of SLAM guardians at the old military base better than merely letting the GM decide. I'd think playtesting would have at least allowed for an estimate of x number of SLAMs per level of superhero, then allowing the GM to adjust that according to his players' characters. The only serious lapse I see is the lack of detail on locations of military base, tracking station, etc., on the players' map of Nacht Island, since these were originally built by the U.S. government and the map is given to the heroes by FISH. Of course, there are more surprises if the players go with less knowledge . . .

Overall, ISLAND OF DR. APOCALYPSE is a satisfying follow-up adventure to *Death Duel* and should help gain new adherents to *V&V* – possibly even regain some who may have defected to some of the newer second-generation superhero RPGs. And if not, with a few revisions, ISLAND would make a good adventure for *Champions* or *Superworld*, too.

*– William A. Barton*

NIGHT OF CONQUEST / DIVINE INTERVENTION, Double Adventure 6 (GDW); $4.98. Designed by William H. Keith, Jr., J. Andrew Keith, and Lawrence Schick. 6" x 9" 48-page booklet. For up to nine players; playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

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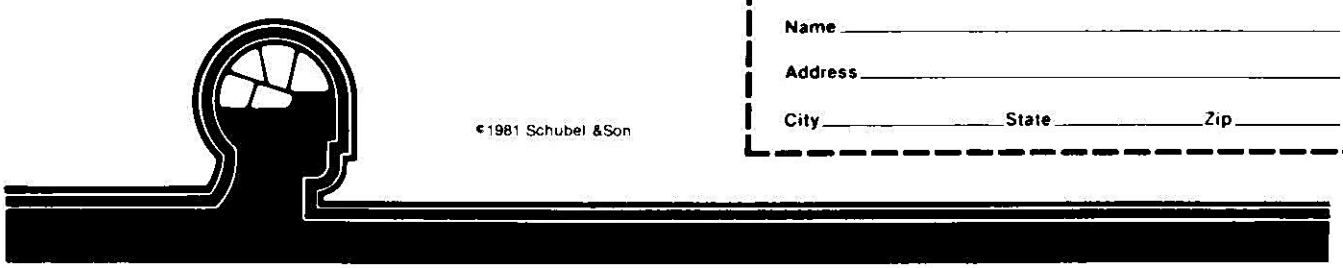

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of a religious dictatorship in the Spinward Marches to adventures of a group of traders caught unawares in a Pearl Harbor-type attack on a trade world in the Reavers' Deep Sector. NIGHT OF CONQUEST, the latter situation, is by the Keith brothers, J. Andrew and William H., and involves the crew of the *Scotian Huntress*, a far trader that has figured in the Marischal adventure ***Trading Team***, and in the series of adventures in TSG several issues back. The adventurers have made contact with the J'aadje of Gaajpadje, an alien race with a rich stock of cultural items to trade for higher-tech goods, and are attending a ceremony to celebrate the initiation of trade relations when the K'tring, a race of warlike humans that share the planet, attack. The adventurers must then make their way through the city to reach their ship at the airship dock, eluding K'tring troops and J'aadje defenders who may mistake them for human attackers. Maps of the city, the palace where the opening ceremony takes place, and the airship port, along with encounter tables for the various sectors of the city, enable the referee to administer the adventure as the players make their escape. DIVINE INTERVENTION sends a group of characters to deliver a "message from God" to the head of the Church of the Stellar Divinity on Pavabid in the Marches – a message that will allow various interests to exploit the mineral wealth on the planet at the Church's expense if the mission is successful. Maps and descriptions of the leader's floating palace form the bulk of the scenario.

NIGHT OF CONQUEST is especially complete for a double adventure and should provide players with quite a challenge, yet could be finished in one sitting (the adventurers must reach their ship within three hours before daylight makes their capture probable). The rules on river travel are a nice extra, too. DIVINE INTERVENTION's main interest is that it's the first *Traveller* adventure (by GDW, at least) to deal at all with religion in any of its various forms. It also introduces an interesting new weapon, the Sonic Stunner, though I rather think its tech level is rated much too high.

The only problems I see with Double Adventure 6 are minor. NIGHT is almost *too* overpowering in its opposition: unless the characters are extremely crafty and run into some lucky rolls or situations (such as managing to capture the K'tring general), they are likely to end up captured or dead. Not one for your shoot-'em-up type of player. Also, I'd have liked to see plans for the dirigible used by the J'aadje, though it really isn't essential to play. DIVINE INTERVENTION's main problem is that the deck plans for the floating palace give me *déjà vu* feelings of the research station in ***Research Station Gamma.***

Still, both adventures should give referees and players at least one good session of ***Traveller*** play each, though NIGHT OF CONQUEST is unquestionably the stronger of the two.

*–William A. Barton*

PRISON PLANET, Adventure 8 (GDW); $4.98. Designed by Erik Wilson and Dave Emigh. 6" x 9" 63-page booklet. For up to nine players; playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

If you're a typical ***Traveller*** referee, you've had groups of players who have flagrantly violated every law in the book during their escapades. And you may have wondered how to deal adequately with such desperadoes. GDW's newest ***Traveller*** adventure shows you how. With 63 pages of maps, descriptions, rumors, prisoner, guard, and staff NPCs, events, and more, PRISON PLANET is GDW's longest adventure to date. Everything you could ever want to know about running a group of adventurers through their prison stretches can be found or extrapolated from the info provided. There are more than six pages of prisoner NPCs with stats, skills, equipment, prison reputation ratings, and descriptions of where they fit into prison life for interaction with the players. There are three pages of similar stats and descriptions of guards and prison staff members. Guidelines are given for the referee on how to administer the characters' first days in prison and how to conduct day-to-day activities and encounters as they serve out the months, years, perhaps even decades of their terms, always looking for that opportunity to make a break for freedom. Rules are given on determining the prison pecking order, on dealing with the various gangs that hold the power among the prison ranks, on handling brawls and knife fights, and on opportunities to steal items of prison equipment. Maps are included of the prison grounds on the surface, the administrative or "safe" area, the cellblock, the upper and lower (radiation danger zone) mining levels, and of a series of natural caves connecting with the lower mining level. And, should the group effect their escape, there is a planetary map and encounter tables for the wilds and the main city on the planet as well.

PRISON PLANET deals with a difficult subject in an interesting and, for the most part, satisfying manner. Though it is set on the planet Newcombe in the Solomani Rim, the basic situation could easily be transplanted to almost any similar world with minor changes. The rules on prison reputation and the revised format for the event and encounter tables in prison are innovative.

One problem with PRISON PLANET is that it may prove difficult to use in actual play due


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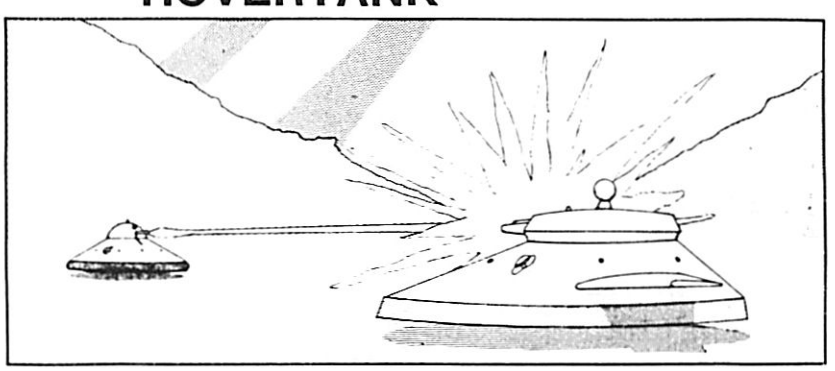

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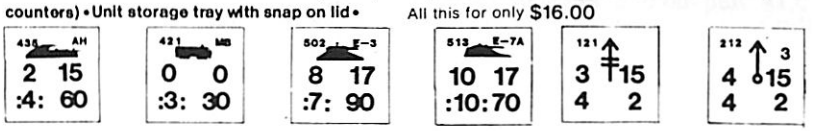


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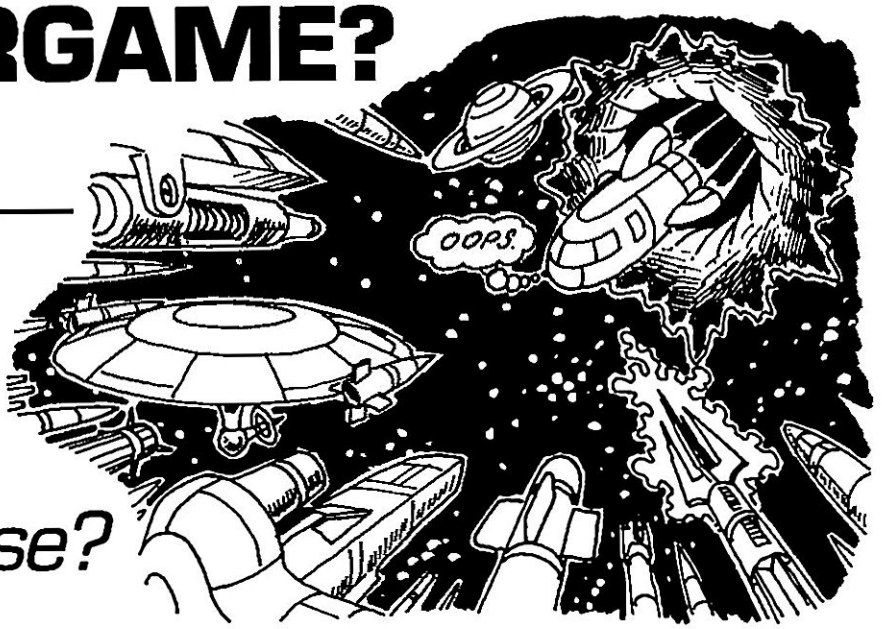


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to the game-time length of the situation – it may literally drag on for years. Care will have to be taken by the referee that play doesn't dissolve into formulaic ritual ("Okay, that's my event; let's see what chance I have to steal a mining pick today . . . Any word on my appeal? No? How's my reputation today? Any new friends or enemies? Okay, next day . . .") or that actual play time doesn't drag in an effort to keep encounters and incidents interesting. Also, some players may begin to feel they have too little control over their own destiny, though this is not outside the bounds of reality under the circumstances.

Overall, PRISON PLANET is a different and complete enough adventure that all referees should be able to find it useful, even if only used in part.

*–William A. Barton*

STAR FLEET BATTLES EXPANSION 2 (Task Force Games); $6.95. Designed by Stephen V. Cole. Second expansion module for ***Star Fleet Battles***. 50-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 108 diecut counters, and 21 new SSD sheets. Published 1982.

If you thought ***Star Fleet Battles*** was complex before, wait 'till you see what's in this expansion! Included are 19 pages of very interesting additional rules and errata, which should cover most of the rule questions players have been experiencing (but not all – keep trying, guys!). Eight new scenarios have been introduced, along with three new campaigns. 32 new ships enter the scene, led by the powerful Federation carrier and the massive Klingon B-10. New weapons and improved fighters are also included, along with the highly-innovative pseudo-fighters.

Probably the best feature of this expansion is the section on new ships. The Klingon B-10 Battleship, Federation CV, and the Kzinti SCS lead a dazzling array of new ships, which include pseudo-fighters for most races. Billed as the "gunboats of deep space," these ships work best in packs and can indeed "tear a heavy cruiser apart in seconds!" Also good are the new rules. The sideslip maneuver eliminates some of the restrictions of the hex grid, and erratic maneuvering rules enable smaller ships to avoid damage at longer ranges while attempting to get close enough to use their weapons.

The only flaw in this expansion is the fact that the "old" system of indexing was used. If you want to find a new rule or clarification of an old one, good luck! Such a massive amount of material is now included in ***Star Fleet Battles*** that finding a rule is more often a product of luck than diligence. Rumors have it that a revised rulebook is on the way. Such a product would be most welcome!

If you play ***Star Fleet Battles*** at all, buy EXPANSION 2. Actually, for $6.95, this expansion is higher-priced than a lot of complete games, but for the avid ***SFB*** player, the money is well spent.

*–Jerry Silberman*

## ARCADE GAMES

COSMIC ARK (Imagic); $29.95. Designed by Rob Fulop. For the Atari VCS. Includes cartridge and eight-page instruction booklet. One or two players; playing time 3-15 minutes. Published 1982.

COSMIC ARK is really two games in one. The first has the Ark in space with meteors careening toward it from four directions. Using the joystick, the player must destroy the meteors to save the Ark. Shooting takes energy from the ship, but being destroyed takes even more. If the Ark makes it through the meteors, it then descends to a planet and beams a small shuttle which hovers above the surface and beams small animals from the planet on board. To make beaming more difficult, the planet has a defense system which can destroy the shuttle (losing energy for the ship) and releasing the animals captured. Capturing these beasties is the way to gain energy for the Ark. The game ends when the ship's energy level is reduced to zero.

The opening screen throws meteors at the Ark for the player to destroy. This part of the game is a pure test of reflexes. The second part, trying to capture animals to refuel, takes timing and a steady hand; fuel is what determines the length of the game, and is thus a very important part of the overall picture.

Unfortunately, the graphics are all right, but not new or extremely interesting, nor do they particularly lend to game play. The shoot-the-meteor sequence can be boring, and the beaming of animals is a little thin to hold up to continual replaying.

Overall, it is difficult to praise COSMIC ARK, though it can be fun at first. It is doubtful that this game will be played enough to justify its price, so perhaps it should be passed by.

*–Richard A. Edwards*

DONKEY KONG (Coleco); $29.99. Cartridge for the Atari VCS. Includes cartridge and 8 page instruction book. One player; playing time usually one to five minutes. Released 1982.

Since its release in mid-1981, ***Donkey Kong*** has been the favorite arcade game of a lot of people; it was the number one arcade game for

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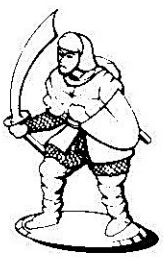

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most of early 1982. When Coleco announced that it would release an Atari version of it, I was thrilled, and anxious to pick up a copy. Too bad it wasn't worth the wait.

The *Donkey Kong* plot is simple: King Kong has grabbed your girl, climbed to the top of a building in construction. You are the brave carpenter Mario, who must climb the building to rescue her, as Kong throws barrels to thwart you. Get to the top, and Kong grabs the girl and moves to a higher level. When you plug in your cartridge, the first sight is a pretty decent representation of *Donkey Kong*'s first level. If you survive it, another screen appears instantly: the rivets. You must run, or jump over all the rivets and when they all disappear, the structure crashes to the ground (in the arcade version) and Mario gets the girl. Play then continues on the first level, but with faster moving objects. And so on. The animation is good, with rolling barrels, a chest-thumping gorilla, and moving fireballs. The scoring is mostly the same as the arcade game.

Unfortunately, this game has a lot of problems, especially when compared to the arcade version. It seems that every time I think about it, I find another error in game play or a similar problem. That's a shame, because the box says "Plays just like the Arcade Game." Sorry, Coleco, but that's totally bogus. The most glaring problem is that the game only has two different screens, where the arcade version has four. And those two are not that accurate. There are ladders at the top of each screen that Mario can't climb. Each screen only has one hammer instead of the arcade's two. And because fireballs (on the second screen) don't change levels, the second screen's hammer is useful for one hit, and that's it. Moves that would be second nature to arcade addicts are impossible. There's only one game on the cartridge, not even a take-turns two-player variation! Apparently, the difficulty switches are not used, since the instruction booklet makes no mention of them. There are several other problems and errors I could mention, but these are more than enough to turn off the dedicated *Donkey Kong* fan.

The faults really outweigh the plusses, especially if you've got "*Donkey Kong* Fever". For the addicted, your cure lies elsewhere. Still, if you just play the game occasionally, or never, you may like this cartridge. However, play the store's copy, or try a friend's, before you buy. Coleco plans to release Atari versions of several arcade games (most notable are the ambitious new *Zaxxon* and *Turbo*). I hope they learn from their mistakes; otherwise, there will be some unhappy gamers around.

*– Ed Driscoll*

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THE ELIMINATOR (Adventure International); $19.95 (16K cassette), $24.95 (32K disk), for the TRS-80. By Westmoreland and Gilman. One or two players; playing time 2-10 minutes. Published 1981.

Ten energizers rest atop gantry towers scattered across the planetscape. Your mission is to prevent alien creatures from capturing the energizers. The screen displays your immediate vicinity. At the top of the screen, a display allows you to monitor the entire planet. This is probably starting to sound familiar to players of the arcade game *Defender*. The aliens are called disruptoids (*Defender* landers), drones (mutants), TDUs (pods), and tracers (swarmers). Your weapons are three disruptor charges (that destroy all enemies on the screen) and plasma bursts. At the end of each wave of aliens, you get a bonus based on remaining energizers. Then you must face a more dangerous wave of aliens. If you lose all your energizers, you must battle the aliens in open space with all disruptoids transformed to drones.

Some modifications have been made, either to avoid copyright problems or due to the TRS-80's limited graphics capabilities, but this is an excellent *Defender* variant. The graphics are among the best I have seen for the TRS-80 and the game is as exciting as the best coin-op ones. The wide area monitor adds a new dimension, since to become proficient you must learn to view two displays at once. The disk version permanently saves the top ten scores. Also, the files are not protected, so you can easily make a back-up copy.

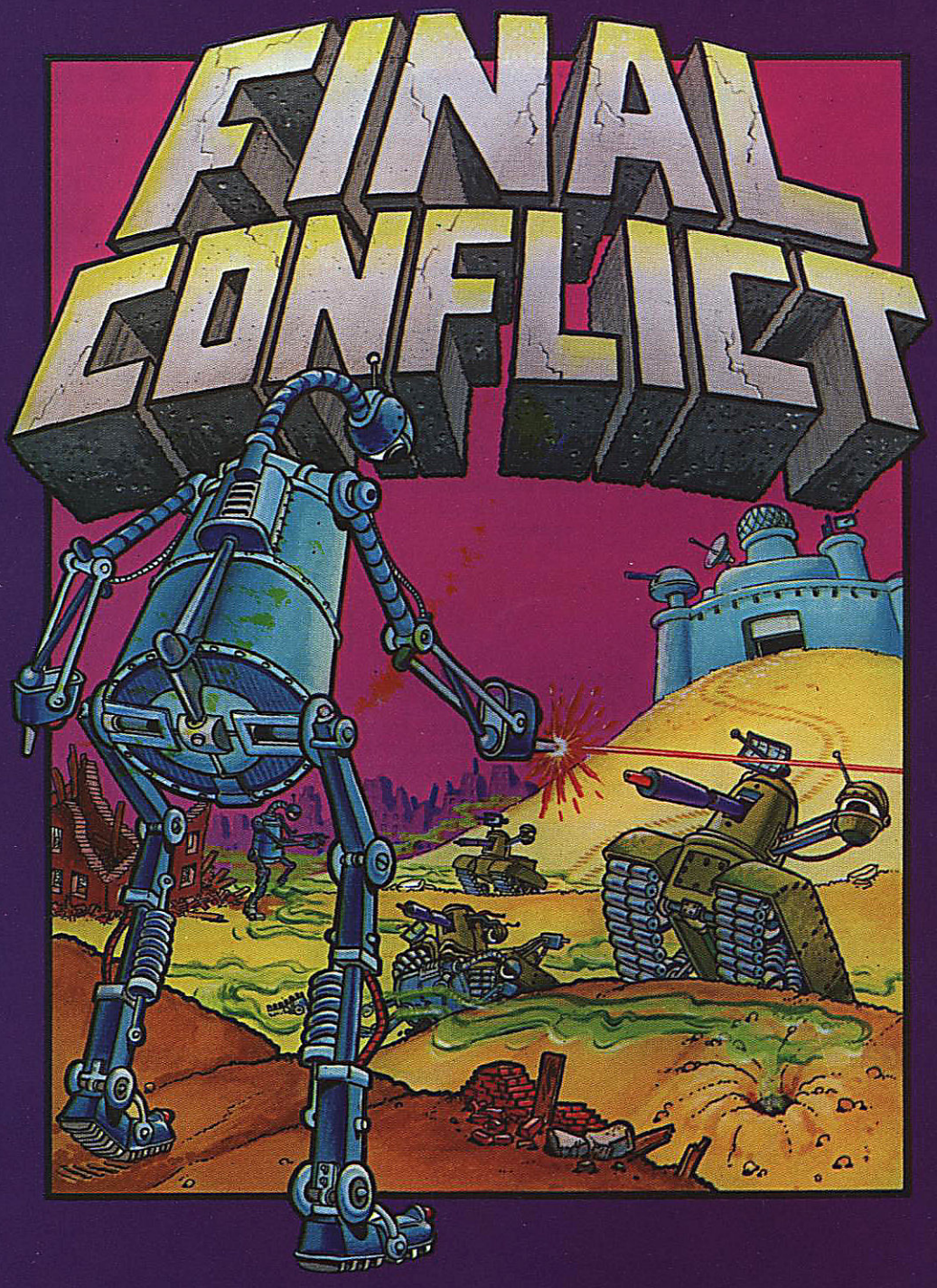
Citing problems with this program requires nit-picking. Players without prior arcade experience may find it too difficult. The program does not have an attract mode or optional joystick control which are available with some games. Its documentation does not specifically state that the arrow keys are used to control movement. Also, I consider the sound routines adequate, but uninspired.

This is simply my favorite TRS-80 arcade game. Normally, I would be hesitant to recommend an arcade game costing over $20, but in this case most buyers will consider their money well spent. An Apple II version is also available, but it appears to be significantly different.

*–Bruce Campbell*

WORD ZAPPER (Vidtec); $29.95. Cartridge for the Atari. Cartridge and 6-page instruction booklet. One or two players; 24 variations; playing time three to ten minutes. Published 1982.

WORD ZAPPER is a mixture of spelling and arcade gaming. A word appears at the bottom of the screen and then letters scroll across the

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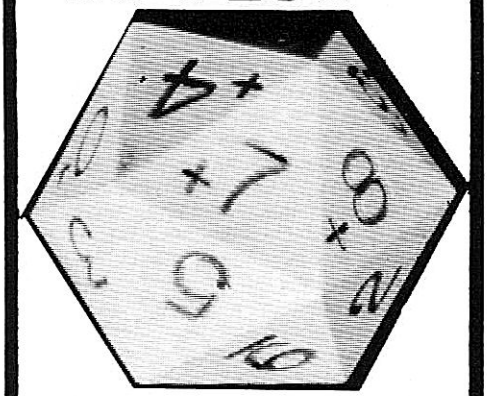

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top. While avoiding or shooting the oncoming meteors, the player must shoot each letter needed to complete the word. Most meteor hits will throw the firing unit off target, but the Doomsday meteor will destroy it. Changeable features allow modification to the Doomsday meteors, the scroll speed, regular meteor density and speed, and whether the word to be remembered is English or a scrambled jumble of letters.

It's actually challenging to try and remember what word you're working on (the display of it is erased at the start) while dodging or shooting meteors and trying to fire at the needed letter. Not only is it an arcade game with a twist, but it might be helpful to younger gamers working on spelling.

The graphics are all right, but not spectacular. And though the game is novel, it is not so fascinating a game as to keep prolonged attention over several games.

It is difficult to make a statement concerning recommendation. WORD ZAPPER is innovative enough to draw attention at first, but it will depend on the individual gamer whether another arcade shooting match with letters is worth the price tag.

*–Richard A. Edwards*

## PLAY AIDS

THE ADVENTURE BOARD and THE WORLD BOARD (Avar Products Inc., P.O. Box 17209, Denver, CO 80217); $8.99 each. Each is a 19" x 25" gameboard with a laminated grid pattern on one side, folded in halves. Manufactured 1982.

These two products, similar in function to Berkeley Game Co.'s ***Battlemats***, are game gridboards which can be marked upon with water-soluble ink and later completely cleaned. These boards are mounted on stiff cardboard with artwork on the reverse. THE ADVENTURE BOARD is a square grid printed over a subdued blue background; THE WORLD BOARD is a hex grid (with ten-hex diameter divisions marked off) on green.

These boards appear to be nice little items designed to tap into the market for play aids usable by all role-playing gamers. It's true that practically every role-playing GM should have some sort of large sheet of laminated gridwork (in whatever grid is appropriate for his favorite game); the question is whether these boards are the best examples to buy.

I'd have to say no. These boards have problems. The cardboard they're printed on is sturdy and thick, but warps easily and is difficult to flatten effectively. Unlike other expensive mounted mapboards, these boards have no special hinge resistant to wear: While others have a line of fabric-based tape or a hinge which is merely an intended continuation of normal board, these have a cut on the artwork side of the board – the actual hinge is merely a few layers of cardboard on which the plastic is laminated. Of the samples sent to the TSG offices, which haven't seen a lot of wear, THE WORLD BOARD mounting board is already tearing away from the hinge cardboard.

The only advantage these could have over comparably-priced items already in production is durability, and it fails on that score. Stick to ***Battlemats*** and hex-sheets laminated at your local art supply houses.

*–Aaron Allston*


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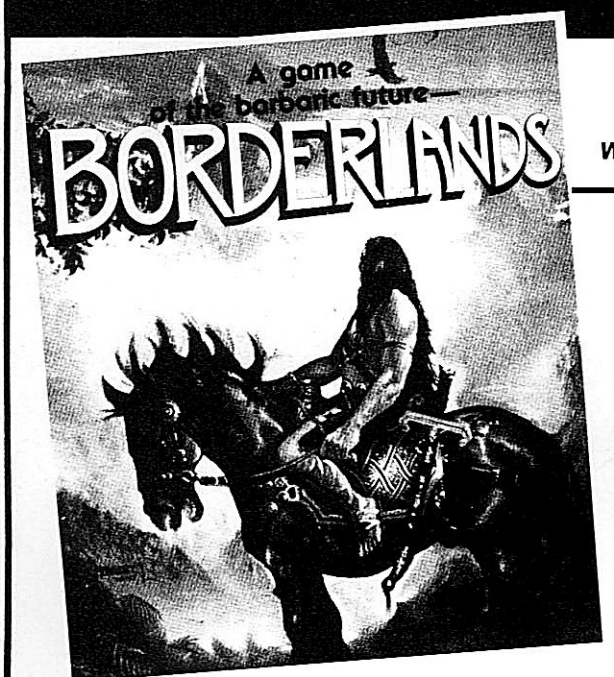


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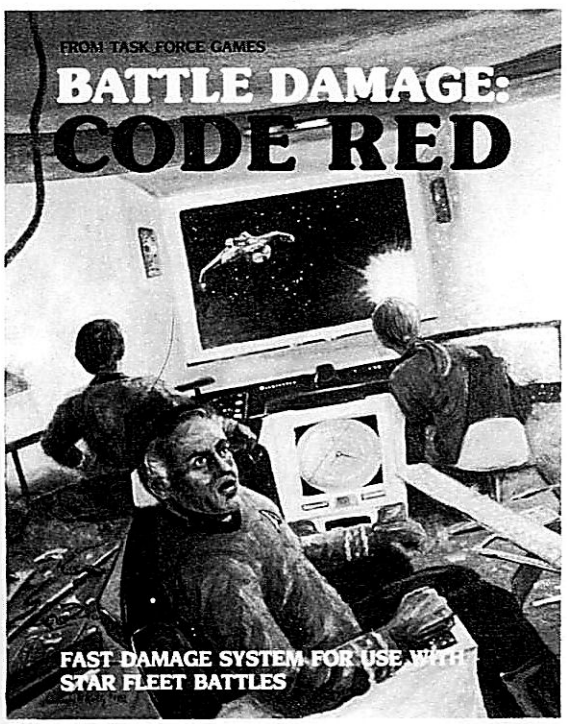


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